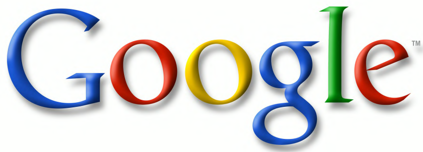

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GRAVENHURST

OR

THOUGHTS ON GOOD AND EVIL

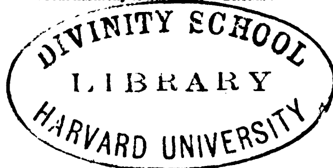
BY

WILLIAM SMITH

AUTHOR OF 'THORNDALE,' ETC.

"The Whole is One."—*Eleatic Philosophy.*

"From harmony to harmony."—DRYDEN.



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GRAVENHURST;

OR

THOUGHTS ON GOOD AND EVIL.

INTRODUCTION.

I CALL this somewhat irregular essay on a very old subject by the name of the place in which it was written, because allusions to that place and its inhabitants, and some conversations with neighbouring friends, have crept into it.

One evening, when returning from my walk through a village which, at least in these pages, bears the name of *Gravenhurst*, I found myself meditating on the old problem of good and evil, and that apparently disproportionate amount of evil which has often perplexed profoundest thinkers, and which has often

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startled into thought the most simple-hearted of men, when suffering themselves under any sharp calamity. A visit paid to a poor woman in distress, and a conversation held with a dear old friend who keeps alive in me the habit of philosophical discussion, had led my thoughts in this direction. It was the hour of sunset. As I paused upon the parapet of our little bridge, the distant Welsh hills were glowing in their purple splendour; the river ran gold at my feet; every branch of every graceful tree that hung silently in the air, received and reflected a new beauty from that entire scene of enchantment, to which also it brought its own contribution. Such harmony there is in nature. The whole, which is formed itself of separate parts, gives to each part its meaning and its charm. Yet even here, in this scene of enchantment, I was compelled to recall to my imagination that poor woman whose desolate hearth I had lately visited,—I was compelled to revive those discordant scenes of war, of carnage, of treachery, of famine, which my friend, an old Indian General, had been dilating upon.

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No harmony then, and little peace, in this other world of Humanity. Is there truly some diabolic element amongst us? Does disorder reign in the highest part of creation? Has the beneficent harmony which human nature should disclose been invaded, broken up, irrecoverably destroyed by some tyrannous spirit of evil? It seems so.

And yet—I reflected within myself—since wherever science has penetrated, disorder and confusion disappear, and a harmonious whole is presented to us, it may happen that this sense of diabolic confusion in the arena of human life would vanish before the light of a wider and clearer knowledge. We suffer—there is no doubt of that—and we naturally speak and think under the sharp pang of our present agony; but the ultimate and overruling judgment which we form of human life should be taken from some calm, impersonal point of view. We should command the widest horizon possible. Of the great whole of humanity we see but little at a time. We pause sometimes on the lights only of the picture, some-

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times only on the shadows. How very dark those shadows seem! Yet if we could embrace in our view the whole of the picture, perhaps the very darkest shadows might be recognised as effective, or inevitable, portions of a grand harmonious whole. "Could we obtain," I said to myself, "some vantage-ground from which to apprehend all the laws which govern this habitable globe—or rather, the laws which both make it to be a habitable globe, and also run through all the life that inhabits it—could we perceive clearly all the relations which man bears to the rest of nature, and which man bears to his fellow-man, through which two classes of relations all his energies are developed—could we also survey humanity as it unfolds in the course of ages, and learn how the Past has begotten the Present, how the Present is preparing for the Future—could we, in short, from our vantage-ground, see *the whole as it has been, is, and will be*—that whole which discloses itself in time as well as in space—I feel persuaded that we should find in human life the same complete harmony that science traces

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in other parts of creation ; I feel persuaded that we should have a spectacle before us whose tendency would be to silence complaint, and prompt and enlighten our efforts, individual and social, after a more complete happiness."

I returned home, with thoughts like these coursing through my mind, and for several months the subject haunted me. Now, when a great topic of this kind takes full possession of you, every trivial event that occurs in your neighbourhood seems to have a bearing on it, or to illustrate some aspect of it ; every person seems to be talking of it, or referring to it ; and you yourself are apt to lead the conversation of your friends to subjects which have more or less connection with the main theme that occupies your mind. During these months all Gravenhurst seemed to be perplexing itself with the problem of good and evil. Some of the conversations of my friends I jotted down at the time, and mingled with my own more didactic exposition.

When I came finally to revise my papers, I put these conversations apart. It appeared the

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better plan to commence with an uninterrupted *Exposition* of my own views, and then add these *Conversations* by way of supplement, which would contain further illustration, fuller development or application of some of the statements in the former part.

Thus much it was necessary to say in order to account for the *form* which this little book has ultimately taken. As to the views which it puts forth, I need hardly disclaim for them any boast of novelty or originality; if I have succeeded in giving a distinct statement to truths which are floating indistinctly in many minds, I shall not have written in vain.

I have no paradox to startle or amuse the reader with. My statements are simply those which must grow up in the scientific age in which we live. The optimism that could boldly declare that this was the best of all possible worlds, does not belong to an age which recognises the limits of its knowledge. He who talks of the best possible of worlds should be able to compare many worlds together. What we, in these times, are saying

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to ourselves is, that this only world we know anything about is essentially *one*—one great scheme, in which the lower, or the simpler, is a necessary condition of the higher or more complex; and that it is idle to quarrel with this or that part unless you can quarrel with the whole, or unless you can separate that portion which is the object of your criticism from the great laws or powers that constitute the whole. You take up some one part of this great scheme of nature and of man, and you, a sensitive human being, exclaim against it as pain and suffering, and denounce it as evil. All this is quite inevitable; but what you exclaim against as *evil,* is often the very excitement of your highest energies, and is always found, on examination, to be linked, either as cause or effect, with what you as loudly proclaim to be *good.* You suffer and you resist, and strive against your calamity, and perhaps this strife is the end for which you suffered; but take away both the suffering and the strife, and you simply destroy the whole web of human existence. Tear this web to pieces, and you

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have behind it—nothing!—nothing for human knowledge.

How can I, or any one, venture to assert that this is the best of all possible worlds? There may be innumerable worlds, and innumerable modes of consciousness, of which we can form no conception whatever. What we can safely assert is this, that our world of nature and of man is one great scheme, and that what we most lament in human life, as well as what most astonishes us amongst physical phenomena, is a consequence of some general law essential to the whole. And, furthermore, we can assert that, if not the happiest of all possible worlds, happiness, and not misery, is the great end and result, the great outcome of this multifarious scheme. This subordination of evil to good may be proved, not only by enumerating the instances in which good comes out of evil, and comparing them with the instances in which evil comes out of good—a process which I should despair of completing—but by seizing hold of certain great laws or facts of human life which show that

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provision is made for happiness of a quite different nature than can be said to be made for misery. There is a susceptibility to pleasure for pleasure's sake, whereas the susceptibility to pain has always the character of means to end, or is the consequence of some abnormal condition. There is a universal delight in energy and activity of all kinds, so that there is joy blended with existence itself; for is not all life activity of some description? Thus pain, when it acts as a stimulant to activity, is lost in the pleasurable energy it excites. Again, the sentiment of beauty which diffuses so much subtle happiness over all parts of life, and which gives origin to the fine arts, and makes the world we live in a constant source of pleasure to the eye, cannot be said to be balanced or neutralised by the opposite sentiment of ugliness. Hardly a plainer indication could be given that joy, and not grief, is the purpose of our world (I presume that we may speak of the world having a purpose), than this wide diffusion of the sentiment of beauty. General considerations of this kind

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are sufficient to demonstrate—if this really needed demonstration — that happiness preponderates over misery.

I have no scales in which to weigh the pains against the pleasures, the joys against the sorrows of mankind. I cannot even gather the individual suffrages of men. I know that orators and poets, eloquent writers of all ages, have delighted to describe life in the saddest of colours ; and something I may have hereafter to say of this eloquent and poetic melancholy. I must here appeal to the testimony of broad and patent facts. Men evidently prefer life to death. Quite independently of the mere instinctive preservation of life, they prefer to live. This is demonstrated by the prospective care they take of life, and the trouble they give themselves to procure and preserve the several pleasures of existence. The industry of the world, its laws, its morality—all prove that life is dear to man. Why should we labour—why should we make laws and institute governments — why keep a constant watch, and exercise a stringent control over each other's

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conduct—if human life, the object of all this care, were worth nothing?

The scheme is one; we are parts of one great whole. We men are not creatures of some other planet brought to live in this. Whatever may be that soul or mind which constitutes us *man*, nothing can be more plain than that it develops its marvellous consciousness in obedience to, and by the aid of all those laws and forces which we call mechanical, chemical, and vital. We are born, we grow, we live according to the same laws that govern all the rest of the world. What is *peculiar* to man is not *separable*, any more than the plant is separable from earth, and air, and water. Nor are those laws and forces on which our very existence depends interrupted or suspended for our behoof. How *could* they be? on their permanence our very existence as breathing and thinking men depends. We live, and move, and have our being, *because* these forces are in incessant activity. If their constancy is our life, how ask of them to be suspended for any of our life-purposes, or even for the pre-

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servation of life itself? If the laws of chemistry afflict a man, he must reflect that by the laws of chemistry he lives. If he thinks he should have lived better according to some other laws of chemistry, I must leave him to work out for himself the laws of this new chemistry.

Do we ask why man is so liable to error and to passion—why his progress in knowledge or judgment is so slow? We have our only answer in the very nature of human knowledge, or what we call the reason of man. The great inherent faculty of man is the power he has of transmuting his fragmentary experiences into general truths, which serve for guidance or for contemplation. But those fragmentary experiences must come first. Our first knowledge comes from the touch upon us of external matter—touch upon the eye, as well as upon the hand: such first knowledge must be very imperfect or partial, though sufficient for the first purposes of life. What the senses immediately disclose, are not those fundamental relations between things or atoms, according to which material

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forces are invariably developed. These have to be learned by many processes of reasoning, through many memories and comparisons. As to the knowledge which men obtain of themselves, and that reflection which is to control their own passions, it is evident that they must first *live* in order to have this knowledge of life; they must first live without the knowledge—live from spontaneous passion and instantaneous judgments—before they can live under the guidance of reflection, or of systematised knowledge of what constitutes individual and social happiness. The higher life must grow. Scientific knowledge, by its very nature, must grow out of guesses and experiments. Refined sentiments, and passion under the control of reason—these point at once to arts, inventions, mental discipline.

A speculative man who, because of the violent passions and flagrant errors of mankind, pronounces that there is a defect of harmony and benevolence in the great scheme of humanity, stands convicted of this inconsistency. He allows that the more cultivated life he admires

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could not have arisen from the first relations man had with nature or his fellow-man, and yet he quarrels with the savage, or the half-civilised man, for not living this cultivated life, but for living that life which was a necessary prelude to it. He quarrels with those ungoverned passions and those fantastic errors which are the result of these earliest relationships, and which lay the foundation for governed passion, and the search for truth. He allows at one moment that man, with certain propensities, and inherent powers of mind and brain, *develops* himself here on earth; and the next moment he is, in fact, angry because some creature already perfectly developed has not descended from the skies. Meanwhile violent passions and imaginative errors, which are the inevitable antecedents to *governed* passions and scientific truth, do not prevent a human life from being, upon the whole, enjoyable. We need not much compassionate the past, and yet may congratulate the present, and hope still better for the future.

The more we reflect on the great whole of

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nature and humanity, the more we are reconciled—not to evil as a thing to be patiently endured, wherever it can be remedied ; but to a condition of things where there is the recognised evil, and the vigour to combat with it. This contest with evil is our very progress, is our very life—it is one with all our effort and energy.

This is no high-flown optimism. There is no paradoxical denial here of pain and suffering ; but contemplations of this kind gird us up to fortitude, and to renewed efforts after happiness.

It does not dismay me to discover that our energies are stimulated, our pursuits are in part initiated, our enthusiasms are almost always sustained, by what, when we stand face to face against it, we must call evil. Evil, to him who has to resist or to endure, it undoubtedly is. In this form it inevitably presents itself. But who does not see that human life, regarded as a whole, would be incalculably impoverished if the energy, the emotions, the aims which originate in the resistance to actual or probable

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evil were abstracted from it? Yes; evil is with us, and in some form and degree must, I suppose, be always with us. Even where it has been successfully combated, the apprehension of its return may still keep us on our guard; but wherever there is intelligent resistance or manful endurance, the evil becomes transmuted into good.

Do not ask for a world without evil. Seek rather to know and rightly appreciate this our own dark-bright existence, and enter, heart and soul, into the old warfare for the Good! It is a noble life in which this contest is bravely and wisely sustained. Worlds there may be where there is only pleasure, and only goodness, but we can form no conception of such a state of things; or so far as we *can* form any conception, it is a languid pleasure and a torpid goodness that rises to our imagination. It is not our supreme wisdom to pass life dreaming of a world where there will be no evil; it is highest wisdom, individually and socially, to do battle for the good, so that this mingled existence which is alone intelligible to us, may put on all

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the glory it is capable of. From this contest we win our felicity and our progress, and the contest itself is a great and enduring happiness, which runs through all the ages of mankind. All that is energetic and noble savours of this contest. Ay, even what is tenderest in human life comes out of some struggle between good and evil. Even our very piety springs from it.

Thus much for the general truth I wish to develop. It will be seen that my sympathies have not been given to that class of thinkers who can discourse with untiring eloquence on every part and every aspect of nature, organic and inorganic, and on the harmonious arrangement which the whole displays, till they ascend to man, and there find ruin, and confusion, and hopeless disorder. I rather agree with those who see throughout one great harmonious and progressive scheme; who see how all in this world culminates in man, and in the progressive intellect of man; who note how pain and suffering prompt his energies; how, through error, he ascends to truth, through passion to self-government. Strange, indeed, would it be,

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if all nature manifested an admirable arrangement of parts, and an evident principle of growth, till we arrived at the history of that conscious and reasoning being whose presence alone gives meaning and purpose to all the rest of nature. The unconscious world has its end, or its complement, in that conscious being in whom it excites pleasure, perception, beauty, truth. Starting from his simplest appetites and passions, all of which have their allotted and apparently indispensable office in his further development, we see him rise into higher emotions, into higher and higher truths. Perhaps from the elevated station he finally reaches, he looks down, with some displeasure and contempt, upon the lower elements of his own nature,—unwisely, if he does not recognise, at the same time, the enormous debt he owes them —does not recognise in those lower elements the very basis of that intellectual structure he has reared. The higher may predominate over the lower — may even, when once developed, obtain an independent footing; and yet, as we shall often have occasion to show,

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it never could have been, in the first place, developed without aid of the lower. The whole is one.

Thus much, I repeat, for the general view which I have to make clear and distinct. This will serve as key-note to our philosophy. And now let me say a word or two of the village of Gravenhurst, near to which I sit and write, and of the friends whose conversations I have here reported.

But, after all, I cannot describe this Gravenhurst except by expressions which would serve equally well for hundreds of villages in England. It is a commonplace ordinary village. So much the better, perhaps, for me who have to treat of what is common and general amongst mankind. It is well to have under my eye a specimen easily examined of our ordinary pleasures, affections, miseries, errors and truths ; and I think that the more carefully such a specimen were examined the more marvellous would human life appear. I think, too, that such an examination would kindle in us a rational love of this human life. With unthinking men an

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enjoyment is less prized because it is widely diffused,—because, in fact, it has the very qualities which ought to exalt it in our eyes,—that of being universal, and that of being habitual. It is commonplace, we say. But one who would form any fair estimate of the good and evil of existence must look out with fresh vision upon this commonplace of human life. Here is this village of Gravenhurst—now growing fast into a town—with its long straggling street, its church, its chapel, its bridge over the river, its green fields through which that river flows—what could be more commonplace? The country, we the inhabitants, think beautiful, but it boasts of nothing to invite the stranger or the tourist, and the villagers are certainly of a quite ordinary stamp. It has its outlying gentry, its clergy, its doctor, and here and there an exceptional character,—a curiosity, as we say. If it had no curiosities of this kind it would not be an ordinary village, but a most rare and unexampled one. But this village of Gravenhurst,—seated amongst its fields and its pastures, with its sky and the moving clouds above it, and

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its infinite horizon, and its births, marriages, and deaths of most ordinary people,—would be an endless theme for poet or philosopher. To the man of genius this commonplace of nature and of man is inexhaustible. The poet wants nothing else; and to the philosopher the frequency or generality of a fact, or a passion, or a thought, augments its value incalculably. I only wish I had the power given me to represent this commonplace in the glory and the novelty it sometimes reveals itself to me. I wish I had the power given me to teach some men whom I could name—strong-headed men perchance, but prone to ponder on the mere dust and dross of humanity—to look abroad with their hearts in their eyes, and note the beauty and the wonder there is in the daily spectacle, and the daily passion of our lives.

Commonplace! Look up! What is that apparition of dazzling brightness rising softly upon the blue sky from behind those tall and massive elms? If you saw it for the first time in your life you would say it must be some celestial visitant. Is it light itself from heaven

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taking shape, and just softened and subdued to the endurance of a mortal vision? It is nothing but a cloud!—mere vapour that the unseen wind moves and moulds, and that the sun shines on for a little time. And now it has risen above the massive and lofty tree, and throws light upwards to the sky, and throws its pleasant shadow down upon the earth—pleasant shadow that paces along the meadows, leaving behind a greater brilliancy on tree, and grass, and hedge, and flower, than what, for a moment, it had eclipsed. It is all commonplace. Light, and shadow, and the river, the meadow with its clover blossoms, and childish buttercups. Very childish all. Match it! match them!—match these trees in their meadows, ye restless prophets with your palaces of crystal, and walls of sapphire, and pavements of jasper! I think there is no better lesson to teach us the beauty of the real and familiar than to read, let us say, some great epic poet, labouring to describe his imaginary bliss, or his celestial city. He builds of jasper, and carbuncle, and emerald; and, lo! he can produce

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nothing comparable to that thatched cottage standing in the corner of a field, with the elm tree at its back. All the apocalyptic visions you have ever read cannot rival a meadow in spring-time. That simple field, with its buttercups and clover blossoms, outshines the imagination of all the poet-prophets that have ever lived. Thank God, all you who have a spark of rational piety in your hearts, for the glorious commonplace of earth and sky,—for this cloud-embosomed planet in which you pass your lives.

And the human commonplace of our Gravenhurst—the mortal creatures who are born and grow up, and droop and die beneath the shadow of these mighty elms,—do you know of any race or description of beings more worthy of your admiration? I can well believe, as an abstract proposition, that in remote regions of the universe there are intellectual natures of a far higher order; but do you know anything of them? can you draw any intelligible picture of them? Until you can, these men, women, and children must take the highest place of

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all things known to you. An interesting race, these human beings. As I pass the meadow, I lean upon the gate that opens into it; I see a little child, almost an infant, toddling alone in the high grass. The tall buttercups have outgrown the child; they and the ox-eyed daisies shut out from its view that neighbouring cottage which is its home; the child has lost its way amidst the flowers it had come to gather, knows not where to turn in this jungle of soft grass. I hear a plaintive cry of distress. Another child, some two years older, as I guess, runs to its aid, caresses, calms it; leads it back to the cottage home of both. How prettily it protects!—how proudly! —seeing that this older one can look above the grass. You perceive that the little fond, and sympathetic, and imitative creature has learnt that tender care from their common mother; you note with a smile the already complex sentiment (sense of power mingled with love) revealed in that protection; you observe how soon the thread of life, and even where it is silken-soft, is spun of pain and pleasure; you

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know, moreover, that beneath the thatch of that cottage, to which these children hand-in-hand are walking, there beats some true and tender mother-heart, the source of all this love to one another—some tender heart whose very anxieties you would hardly dare to diminish.

Cottage or mansion, it is all the same. These home relations exist everywhere, and everywhere are the source of untold happiness. It is pleasant to note that no distinction of wealth or station interferes with the love and homage of the child to the parent. The "father" is always the first of men. I have seen a little girl carry his dinner to the labourer in the field, who sat under the hedge to eat it; no patriarch was ever waited on with a sweeter reverence. True! where poverty degrades the man by rendering subsistence insecure, by compelling him to dishonourable means for obtaining it, the relations of the family may turn to gall and bitterness (which should give additional motive to one and all for expelling such form of poverty from the world); but honest labour, and a rude simple way of life,

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do not starve out the affections. I observe a pride in the port, a tenderness in the eye, of every man who presses a child to his bosom. There is no garment so thick or rude but a child's finger penetrates it. The poorest man is monarch, by divine right, over one little loving subject.

I know well that it is not always amidst flowers that, child or man, we lose our way in this world. Very thorny paths some of us tread. And nothing is more true than this, that suffering of some kind runs through the life of all, simple or sage; it mingles with the pleasures of sense, it ascends with us into the most lofty regions of thought. I need not say, therefore, that our Gravenhurst has its share of miseries,—has its wants, its sorrows, its crimes; perhaps under some roof, unknown to any of us, a terrible guilt or anguish may lie hid. But that which meets the eye everywhere, or most conspicuously, is labour, work of some kind, performed cheerfully, socially, habitually. There is a stolid content in the countenance of most men you meet; a more talkative and bustling

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activity distinguishes the women. We, in common with all England and the greater part of Europe, have reached that stage of civilisation and of culture in which the necessary labours of life are undertaken with cheerful foresight, and where industry is a steadfast voluntary habit. There is no savage impulse of sheer hunger, no savage sloth when the hunger is satisfied; and we have long passed that epoch when industry was sustained by the goad of the slave-master. We have learned that health and pleasure lie hid in labour. We know that the toil which ministers to life is itself the best part of life. And we have a pleasant country to live and work in. No scenery, as I have said, to invite strangers to *come to see it,* but such beauty as, thank Heaven! is bestowed lavishly over the surface of the earth. We have our river and undulating land, arable and pasture, and on the horizon the distant mountains of Wales. These, and the clouds which we share with all the world, catch for us the hues of sunrise and sunset, and together create for us, not one, but many lovely land-

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scapes. But a beautiful country is made first of all to live in, not to look at as a picture. More than half our day is spent unconscious of its charms. This is as it should be. Not to render idle was all this beauty of the earth given; nor do the idle enjoy it. To them it ceases to be lovely—grows weary, flat, stale, and unprofitable. The peasant must fix his eye on the furrow which his plough is making —the blacksmith looks steadily at the red-hot iron he is hammering at his forge—the scholar must pore upon his book; but all from time to time look up, and the landscape is there to greet them. Our beautiful trees are there, and their tremulous leaves seem to feel that we gaze upon them. Chiefly we pause at evening when the day's work is over. Then the sun shines for a season as if rather to give beauty than to give light. He throws the hues of all the roses over us as he wishes us farewell.

Of course we make our outcries against the miseries of life; and there is real evil and indisputable sorrow amongst us. But we strike down the evil where we can, and we soothe

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the sorrow where we can. And then this energy with which we strike, and this tenderness with which we soothe—I think we should not, after due deliberation, forfeit these for an immunity from pain and sorrow. Some evils, you will say, do not prompt to action—rouse no energy—are simply to be endured. Well, this endurance conquers them, wrings a strength and pride out of them. They prompt this energy of fortitude. I go back to the meadow where I saw the children amongst the flowers. Childhood itself shall give me my illustration. Some days afterwards I encountered the eldest one alone; she did not perceive me; I could watch her unobserved. There was a very luxuriant crop of nettles growing beside the hedge. I saw her put her little tender hand, slowly and deliberately, to the leaf of the stinging nettle. She wanted *to try if she could bear the pain.* The grave little Spartan! I asked her if she knew that the nettle stung. "Oh, yes! she knew it;" but added, blushing, partly with pain and partly at being observed, "Mother says that

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unless we can bear pain we shall be cowards and useless people. I wanted to try—it is not so very bad." Ah, little Annie Foster! there was no need to go in search for the nettle. But you bore the trial well, and greater trials, I doubt not, you will bravely bear. Again I draw the inference that there was a brave as well as tender mother bestirring herself under the thatch of that cottage.

If any one really asks the question, Whether, in human life, the amount of pleasure is greater than that of pain? I shall bid him look at his own *Gravenhurst*, wherever that may be, and frame the answer for himself. But I do not think that the question was ever seriously put, Why is man more miserable than happy? The question has always run thus, Why so much misery in a being who might apparently have been much happier?

I turn from this glance at the village and its more homely inhabitants to introduce my friend General Mansfield, to whom I have already made allusion, and whose authority I shall often invoke. He is by far the most

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remarkable man in our neighbourhood. I was going to say that he would be a remarkable man anywhere; but I am not sure that the expression would be correct. What is peculiar in the General is the completeness of his character, and of his intellectual culture; and remarkable men are, for the most part, those who have done some one extraordinary act, or cultivated some one faculty to an extraordinary degree. He served in India, both in a military and civil capacity; he has been a student; he has lived alone; he has lived in the society of the great; his experience of life has been as varied as his knowledge of books. His career in India took place before the great Mutiny, and the events in which he was concerned have therefore lost their importance, or at least their present interest. But he distinguished himself in more than one campaign; and, having acted for some years as military secretary to the Governor-General, he has been also well initiated into the affairs of civil government. But perhaps that part of his career which left the deepest traces on his

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mental culture were those early years in India in which his professional duties gave him little employment, and confined him to a very solitary mode of existence. Soon after his arrival from England, the young officer was sent up the country to one of our outlying positions, where, in time of peace, there is little or nothing to do but to see after the drill and equipment of a handful of soldiers. Here, with no society and few books, he was driven much upon his own reflections. A less active mind would have deteriorated under such a discipline ; General, then Lieutenant, Mansfield was only strengthened by it, and confirmed in his self-reliant habits of thought. The few books he had were of a grave and profound character. "I was obliged to think over them a great deal," I have heard him say, "or they would not have lasted me long." Some of them were books brought with him for the study of the ancient language and literature of India, and these involved him in the subtle and metaphysical speculations which distinguish certain sects of Brahminism and

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the great Brahminical reformation, if it may be so considered, which bears the name of Buddhism. The time spent in this species of retirement fostered habits of reflection which the active services of subsequent years never destroyed, but only *fed* by the experience they brought of war and politics.

One sees, therefore, that General Mansfield has had great advantage for a varied and complete culture. Nor have the domestic affections been unknown to him. He lives now amongst us, in his modest villa, the life of a bachelor. He is, in fact, a widower; he is, however, childless. Of wife and child he was early bereft. He is of a gentle, generous, and constant nature; and his few happy years of married life have left so indelible an impression on his mind, that I cannot pass them over without some mention.

When "young Mansfield" (as intimate friends then called him whom now we speak of as the "old General") first sailed from England, he carried with him a tender sentiment, the formal expression of which he thought

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himself bound to suppress; and many a time when, in his solitary station, the learned Sanscrit book lay open before him, his thoughts had wandered back into Somersetshire, and were with a certain Emily Carden. He had no right to believe that the said Emily Carden was still remembering him. But she also was of a constant nature; she had divined his love; she had more sanguine hopes of his future career than he himself entertained; she had quietly laid up her heart as a treasure for him should he ask it; and *till* she knew that he never would or could ask it, no other disposition of it should ever be contemplated by her. When Mansfield paid his farewell visit to Emily and her parents, she took with him one sad and silent walk round the garden,—almost silent, for ordinary topics of conversation could not interest at that moment, and their own deep personal feelings neither of them ventured to express. On leaving the garden they shook hands together, as simple friends shake hands; and while Emily's hand was in his, the young officer, hiding his emotion under

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the affectation of an antique and chivalrous courtesy, bent one knee on the plot of grass on which they were then standing, and raised the hand, which he was to part with for ever, to his lips. It was, in appearance, an act of playful homage; but for days afterwards Emily would let no one touch that hand—the hand which *he* had kissed. Nay, for years she felt his lip upon that spot,—often, I think, in secret kissed that spot herself. But, at the time, no one knew why it was that, when she sat musing alone with her elbow on the arm-chair, it was so often the back of her curved hand that her lip rested on; and no one guessed why it was—since the attitude was not ungraceful, though a little singular—why it was that she started with a faint blush when suddenly disturbed in it. Her thoughts, I believe, were always in India when she fell into that attitude.

The very turf on which they had stood together at that leave-taking was a sacred spot. How carefully it was mown! Once it was in great danger of being destroyed. The

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gardener and her father had both resolved upon its removal to carry out some projected improvements, but Emily had pleaded so energetically—no one could tell why—for its preservation, that the little plot of grass was allowed to remain.

"How cold is Emily Carden! beautiful, but how cold!"—so ran the general estimation of her amongst female friends. "She repels all advances. Does she mean, then, to waste the summer of her existence? Is it pride? Can no one be found worthy to please? Or is it really coldness and a loveless nature?" So we reason upon each other. Mansfield, on his side of the great ocean that rolled between them, found the thought of Emily Carden mingling itself even with the abstractions of Hindoo philosophy, yet he mentally resigned her to some happier mortal than himself. No correspondence was kept up between them. He heard of her, however, from common friends in England, and heard, to his surprise, that she was still Emily Carden; to his surprise, and yet with some other feeling to which he gave no

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name, and which half contradicted the surprise. At length the time came when he could claim leave of absence and pay England a visit. The first interview decided all. She was living in the same house in which he had seen her last; there was the same garden to walk in; and there were the same feelings in both, as if ten minutes, and not ten years, had elapsed. Something of the same silence, too, recurred as they walked round the garden together, till Captain Mansfield, as he was then styled, contrary to his usual habit, became singularly egotistical, talking much about life in India, and about his own prospects, his own feelings and opinions, and ending in some proposition to which Emily at first gave no response. She led his steps to the small piece of greenest lawn, on which they had both stood together when he last bade her adieu. "Did he remember it?" He remembered well. He seized the given hand;—this time with a solemn homage—his own henceforth for ever! She returned with him to India as his wife.

A supreme happiness followed; but, alas,

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how brief! Hardly three years had passed when the wife, and the child that had been born to him, were sleeping in the earth. It was fortunate for the sufferer that, war having broken out, he could not indulge in long and fruitless sorrow; he had to dash away the tears that he might give the word of command, and carry his regiment into action. From that time his promotion was rapid, and his life full of stirring occupation. He retired from the service wealthy and honoured. He has now lived some years in this quiet place, somewhat shattered in bodily health, but in the full maturity of his intellect. Am I not right in saying that such a man has lived a complete human life—such as was fitted to develop his mind on all sides? I consider myself fortunate in being able to call him my friend.

To me, who have passed my days almost exclusively amongst books, the companionship of such a man is invaluable. He gives me his experience; I see through his eyes the very realities of life. Even in matters of pure speculation, I find his straightforward judgment of

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great assistance. He has read fewer books than I, and, partly for that very reason, judges with more clearness and decision. I prefer often to quote his words, because he decides where I should hesitate. But I beg to say that I never cite him on any occasion where I positively differ, unless that difference also is positively expressed. It is no *Conflict of Opinions* that I am writing here; I call in his aid to complete or fortify my own conclusions, or, at most, to express an opinion where I should have none to offer. It is rather a *Harmony* than a *Conflict* of opinions that these pages represent.

If the judgment of any one individual on so large a subject as the felicity of human life could avail anything, there is no man's judgment I would quote with more alacrity than that of General Mansfield,—he has seen so much, and felt so much, yet kept his head so clear. A man of his experience is not likely to scatter golden opinions indiscriminately over the wide arena of human existence. He knows that there is pain and sorrow to endure, and that there are bad men to be resisted. He

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knows there is enough in the world to commiserate, enough to detest. But never from the General do I hear a note of misanthropy. Humanity is, with him, God's greatest work we know of. Nor will he listen patiently to vague, general lamentations on the misery of mankind. He has been so much impressed with the great and constant joy that lies in *activity* of every description—a joy which, from its constancy, is often overlooked—that he is slow to consider anything as a misfortune which brings out the full energies of the man. We make moan often about events because *they look* terrible to the spectator; the actors themselves are absorbed in their own passions and their own efforts. We look *at* the man, not *in*. We look at the circumstances, not at the nature roused and moulded to meet them.

"You are standing," he will say, "in your own pleasant drawing-room, well defended from the weather, and you listen to the storm raging without. The rain dashes violently against that film of glass which yet so securely protects you from its violence. Your thoughts

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fly to the sea, and you picture to yourself the misery of some hapless voyager, who, drenched to the skin, is holding on by the rigging to save himself from being carried overboard by the rage of the tempest. You, warm and indolent, project yourself in imagination into such a scene. But the man who is really there, is no warm and indolent creature; he has all the energy the situation itself has called forth. You congratulate yourself on your easy-chair, your dry and comfortable room: congratulate yourself by all means, and enjoy what the quiet hour brings you. But probably you yourself, at some other time, have been in the very position that seems so dreadful now. You have clung with all your might to the shrouds while the waves washed over you, while the winds seemed resolved to tear you from your hold, and sweep you away into the ocean. But you clung, you strove gallantly, you drew breath when the wave had passed over you, and prepared, with clenched hands, for the next encounter. You were there at your post, you had no thought of surrender, you were all energy; the

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danger was swallowed up in the efforts you were making. Well, call up that hour when, drenched and buffeted by water and by wind, you offered stout resistance to the elements in every strong fibre of your body—call it up fairly, fully, and place it beside this hour of fireside enjoyment and security, and tell me which of the two was the higher life? Which of the two are you most proud to have experienced? If we wish to form a correct estimate of human existence, we must not dwell upon the loud bluster of the storm, and forget the thrill of power that responds to it in the hidden noiseless nerve of the living man.

"This marvellous energy," he continued, "seen in all animal life, but most conspicuously in man, calls forth my ceaseless admiration, and affords often a complete answer to men wailing over the destiny of others. So long as I see the man bear up and contend against the hostile circumstance, so long do I know that he is not forsaken by the genius of happiness. I have witnessed the horrors of war; I have shared in the forced march; I have traversed

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the field of battle *the day after*; but still I do not scruple to say that, merely weighing out its pleasures and its pains, the excitements which attend on war itself add far more to the sum of human happiness than its worst calamities to the sum of human misery. My niece — who sits there in the corner so critically attentive to me — looks dissent. But I do not advocate war, my dear Ada, or desire its continuance. The energies of man may find a better direction; but it is still well to see that, whatever direction they take, they can scarcely fail to add to the sum of happiness. So much does our happiness lie in this energy itself.

"Take, if you prefer it, an illustration from the arts of peace. Follow the miner into the bowels of the earth—watch the artisan at his loom, packed close in the dark alleys of a town; the *circumstances* are to us distressing enough. But the man in whom those circumstances have developed the fitting and appropriate activity is not an unhappy creature. Before you pronounce a man miserable, be sure

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you have the real being before you—be sure that you are not pronouncing on some imaginary figure, made up half of him and half of yourself—his circumstances and your temper and habits."

I could not possibly complete my description of the General unless I introduced into the picture that niece Ada, who was listening to him on this occasion, and whom he partly addressed.

The General was of that nature that cannot be satisfied unless it has something to love and to cherish—some one to pet and to admire. He found all this in Ada Newcome. Her presence at Gravenhurst was the great inducement to him to settle down in this quiet neighbourhood. She is the daughter of a sister of the General's, who had married a Mr Newcome, a country gentleman possessing a small estate in these parts. Mr Newcome had died before the General's return from India. Ada was living with her mother.

I say the inducement was the society of his niece, because, although the brother and sister were on quite amicable terms, Mrs Newcome

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was one of those very useful, domestic, and often estimable women who frankly and utterly renounce all *book culture.* The daughter was of a totally different type, and could readily follow her uncle on almost all subjects that he could desire to converse upon.

Let me stop to observe that if there are moody reasoners who think it fit to express nothing but commiseration for the lives of men battered in the business and rascality of the world, even these will confess that there is something to admire, and a theme for gratulation, in some fair European girl or woman on whom has been showered wealth, beauty, and intelligence. When I see, for instance, a young English girl, full of grace and full of energy withal, dismount from her favourite horse, which she does not quit without a fond and grateful patting of the neck, and follow her in imagination into her cheerful drawing-room, more or less elegantly furnished, supplied with books of a thoughtful character, which are really read, and perhaps with instruments of music that are skilfully played upon, I think

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I have before me one of the most highly-finished, certainly one of the most significant, products of our civilisation. I suppose that a learned jurist or a profound divine would cite themselves, or cite each other, as loftier examples of humanity—as higher types of European culture. I must be permitted to demur. I grant, indeed, that either of them may be a shade wiser than the English damsel of nineteen, and many shades more learned; but it is a newer wonder in the world that there should be many damsels of nineteen intelligent and wise, than that there should be learned lawyers and deep divines. And when I think that the mental cultivation has not disturbed one natural grace or one maidenly virtue — when I think of the blooming health and exquisite play of every limb and feature—the vivid emotions, the keen perception of the beautiful in nature, of the generous in character, that distinguish my English girl—I must pronounce her altogether the far higher creation. Yes, a greater boast of the age than all its chancellors, and even all its bishops!

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Such charming English girl, you would have said, was Ada Newcome. There came, however, one bitterness into her lot, which marred the picture I have to draw.

I call to mind the first time I saw Ada Newcome. It is now some years ago, but I remember it as vividly as if it were yesterday. She passed me (I was on the way to her house), sitting upon her horse. A more light and graceful figure, or a better rider, I thought I had never beheld. The slight figure sat balanced so perfectly, and swayed so harmoniously with every movement of the high-spirited yet gentle-hearted animal, that you looked on with unalloyed pleasure, and without one moment's anxiety for her safety. If her fleet Arabian should give himself to the winds, you felt she would be as safe as if she were one of the winds herself. I see her rein up that proud Arabian; I see her dismount at her own door; she caresses the beautiful creature, who bends down his head to meet the caressing hand. I perceive his eye brightens as he feels that the eye of his mistress is on him. It rests on him with something of a

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tender gratitude, and there is some unspoken sadness mingling with her fond caress. She leaves the horse, and proceeds to walk up the wide old-fashioned staircase of the ancient family house she inhabits. But what is this? What change has come over my beautiful picture? Can it be the same figure which I saw a moment ago, light and buoyant as the air, that I now see dragging itself slowly and painfully up those stairs—one hand, sometimes both, clinging to the banisters for aid? Ada is lame—the result, I believe, of some early accident—hopelessly lame. Well might she love that horse! Seated on his back, she flew—no bird of the air more graceful; descended to the earth, one limping and disabled limb mars all. At each slow step the fair figure drops sideways —is broken—sinks and rises, as if each step were a fall and a recovery. The balance is recovered, to be directly lost again. She advances up the stairs as children do, putting always the same foot foremost, and bringing the other up to it. And when the stairs are accomplished, the level surface that remains to be traversed makes the

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plunging, broken gait still more conspicuous; our lily threatens to snap at every instant.

But when seated again in her chair, or standing quietly in the room, nothing is seen but a figure and attitude unimpeachably graceful, and a face of singular beauty. A stranger might even be in her presence some time without detecting this sad defect in her gait; for if only two or three steps were to be taken, she would, by treading on a footstool, or by some other expedient, contrive to disguise her lameness. This she would do in no vain hope of concealment, but from that love of the graceful which in her had been so cruelly balked. I have seen her exercise these little stratagems where none but relatives or old friends were present. I have seen her make her way along the room, touching perhaps at the sofa or the centre table in her passage, by a series of movements which you might have thought capricious, but which you never would have referred to an inequality in her limbs.

Every other grace but that of one movement has been reserved to her, and the beauty of her

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face has lost nothing of its attraction. It presents a combination not frequently seen—deep-blue eyes, a fair delicate complexion, and raven-black hair. In only one other person have I ever remarked that combination. Some of our belles at Gravenhurst think the complexion much too pale. The buxom Miss Rosemary is always wishing that she could give a touch of red to dear Ada's cheek. Keep your roses, dear Miss Rosemary, for your own cheeks, where they are very becoming. Keep, or give them to the sighing swain that is kneeling for them; but let not even their reflection fall too strongly upon our perfect lily of Gravenhurst.

A lover of books she would in any case have been, but it was the inevitable result of her lameness to make her attached to them in a remarkable degree. There was also one other result. She conceived the idea that it would condemn her to single life. Many girls commence their womanhood by saying, "I shall never!" which may be only one sign that thoughts of marriage are stirring in the mind. Ada Newcome said it in sad earnest, and with

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a proud resignation. A little incident that occurred while she was yet in her *teens*, aided her in forming this resolution. There was a young gentleman who visited a great deal at her father's house. I knew nothing of him, except that he was a handsome fellow, and a general favourite with the ladies. This young gentleman was talking to a friend of his own age, and the friend was rallying him upon "being in love with the pretty heiress." "What! with the lame girl!" answered our youth, with a laugh. Ada was passing at the time, and heard the speech, and heard the laugh that accompanied it. "What! with the lame girl!" rang in her ears. She repeated it again and again to herself as she crept along by the garden-rails against which our youths had been leaning, cigar in mouth, and mutually communicating their much smoke and their few ideas. "What! with the lame girl!" Yes, men might be very polite—the more polite for her very lameness—and yet recoil from the idea of a lame wife. One of the two evidently thought that the quality of heiress might act as compensa-

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tion. Worse and worse; it was altogether a bitter lesson that had been administered to her. She was determined to keep her heart shut up, and, as it were, hermetically sealed.

The delight which the General experienced in meeting, on his final return to England, this charming relative, and the affection and devotion he felt towards her, I should find it very difficult to express. Her deceased father could not have loved her more intensely, and with this quite parental feeling he mingled a tender homage to her beauty and misfortune. It was the greatest delight to him to render her every service in his power. Nor do I think it could have been possible in all England to have found a companion so entirely suited to the General as his own niece soon proved to be; for her fresh, inquiring, and susceptible mind rekindled his own. Though piously disposed, the highest speculations of philosophy were open to her. Her piety was not of that order that checks the inquiry after truth, and forbids to the reason its full and appropriate exercise. Nor, on the other hand, had the

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uncertainties that attend upon philosophical speculations chilled her piety, though they had saddened her soul. She was prepared to listen or to discuss on almost every topic that could interest a cultivated mind.

One of the amusements of the General is the building of a villa—he says, for his own residence; but it requires very little penetration to perceive that it is for his niece he is planning and building. He consults her on every particular. A site has been chosen that commands an admirable view of the Welsh hills; he pleases himself with the idea that his niece shall have one of the most perfect villa-residences in England.

They often sally forth together (and I have sometimes had the good fortune to accompany them) to inspect the progress of the building, he walking, and she riding by his side, now upon a charming pony which he has persuaded her to substitute for her high-spirited horse. This he has done both because he can walk the better by her side, and because he is a little apprehensive of danger from her want of mere

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power to rein in the more spirited animal: her strength has been declining of late. They proceed in this fashion to the very beautiful spot where the walls of the villa are rising. He lifts her down gently from the pony, deposits her on what is to be the future lawn, draws forth his plans, his drawings, and consults her taste on all the arrangements, accessories, and ornaments that he proposes. Then there is talk of the pictures and statues he means to introduce ; and from the fine arts the conversation naturally wanders and widens till there is no possible topic that might not be embraced in it. Our great topic of good and evil was not likely to be omitted.

The group would not be faithfully described unless I made specific mention of Ada's pony. She is as fond of it as she was of the Arab, and he returns her affection. He is as tractable and social as a dog. On dismounting, she has no necessity to tie him up ; pony has no idea, however intent upon his grazing, of losing sight of his mistress. He comes to her as a dog would come when he is called. She has

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used no art to obtain this docility. She is simply fond of her dumb friend, and her dumb friend is fond of her, and pleased to render a service which he seems to have detected is more a service to her than it would be to another.

The presence of the pony has led us sometimes to discuss the relationship between man and the lower animals. The brute creation in general are very deeply interested in the question of the progress of man. I do not think that their condition has been at any time deteriorated, upon the whole, by their subordination to one who may seem to them a strange mixture of cruel taskmaster, of beast of prey, and of fatherly protector. If he has, in one spot and for one purpose, cruelly misused them, he has on other occasions, and more generally, protected, sheltered, and even cultivated in them a certain amenity of disposition. But there is still much room for improvement, especially when we keep them for their labour. How much we owe them! How much did our ancestors owe to their ancestors! Life itself,

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food, and cultivated plains. I know not that even now, with all our command of the forces of physical nature, with all our steam-engines and our chemistry, we could hold ourselves on the face of the earth without them. I think the higher men grow, the more tenderly they will feel towards these simpler tenants of our common habitable globe. They have made it habitable to us; they are capable of affection; they can give us the greatest of all pleasure—that of giving pleasure to other beings. These things we sometimes discussed. Ada, resting on the authority of I forget what celebrated writer, remarked, "that of all the arrangements of Providence, the subjection of so many noble animals to the tyrannical power of man was surely the most perplexing;" to which I, or the General, would respond, that the power was not always used tyrannically; that as man progressed in knowledge and in character he used his power beneficently; and that if man was to be raised to this noble and beneficent position towards the lower animals, he must necessarily have the *power* given him, though

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under the certainty that in his own ruder stage of culture he would often abuse it. The relationship between man and the lower animals, looked at along the history of both, will not need any peculiar vindication of the ways of Providence.

These and kindred subjects we discussed, but I have said that my report of our conversations shall be postponed till I have delivered myself of my own brief didactic exposition.

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EXPOSITION

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CHAPTER I.

PAIN AND PAINFUL EMOTION.

I MUST unavoidably commence with some trite and indisputable observations; but I will be as brief as possible. Pain and Pleasure are the stimulants to that activity which is the source of all our knowledge and all our arts, and which is itself the most universal of pleasures. It is impossible for us to conceive of life being developed without *both* of these stimulants. Hunger, thirst, bodily uneasiness, are constantly giving movement to the whole animal creation.

Pain, that acts as a stimulant to action, blends with or is lost in the sense of effort, or the vigorous muscular exertion it calls forth. Very acute pain paralyses or subdues; but the

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prick and the sting that stimulate to energetic movement are forgotten in the energy they produce.

In many of our motives it is difficult to say whether pain or pleasure predominates. Hunger having been once gratified, there is a prospect of pleasure, as well as a present pain, in the desire for food. Generally there is in *Desire* the anticipation of some pleasure, and also a direct pain from the absence of that pleasure. If now this important state of mind, which we call Desire, be thus a blending of pain and pleasure, we see at once how indispensable a part pain performs in human existence.

Pain also is the great conservator of life: it gives note of danger. The memory of pain is our great safeguard and protection. If the fire did not hurt the child, it would not withdraw its finger; if the hurt were not remembered, there would be no salutary dread of the fire afterwards. So also the pain that arises from any abnormal condition of our own organism draws our attention to the ailment, imposes

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rest, suggests remedial actions, and teaches caution for the future. We should die very rapidly if it were not for the pain of disease.

If a personal want initiates the activity of the individual, it is *sympathy* with each other which lies at the basis of human society; and sympathy is, in the first instance, chiefly called forth by pain, or dread of some affliction. We sympathise with each other's joys no less than with each other's griefs. But even when we sympathise strongly with each other's joys, it is where there is some sense of escape from threatened or probable affliction; and, generally speaking, this form of the sentiment is of later culture or development. Society, in its earlier stages, owes more to the sympathy which is called forth by pain, by wounds, by death. That sympathy which enlists the passions of twenty men in the suffering and calamity of one, is the rude initiator of criminal justice and moral reprobation. Could I point to any great fact which shows more distinctly how pain and pleasure lie together at the very roots of human existence? They, indeed,

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are twisted together in every fibre, in every leaf, in every blossom and fruit of the great tree of life.

It would be idle to pretend that disease is not an evil. It is, if you reckon amongst diseases all the distressing bodily results of age and poverty, the greatest and the most widely spread of all the evils that afflict society. But if you regard society at large, you will find that these bodily distresses are eventually leading to combined social action for their relief. And if you regard the family group, you cannot fail to perceive that where the sick, the aged, and infirm are cared for and preserved alive, there is a development of compassion, of tenderness, of fortitude, and of other states of mind which greatly enrich our human lives. I do not say that the presence of an invalid is always salutary to the temper of the other inmates of the house; we all know that it sometimes operates in a very undesirable manner; but, speaking generally of human life, it tends to soften, to elevate, to teach self-denial.

I look through the village of Gravenhurst.

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I could point to more than one household where the tone of thought and feeling has been evidently raised by the presence of its invalid. One I could name where the husband is naturally rough and boisterous, and the wife somewhat sharp and shrewish—given much, they say, to scandal. A favourite daughter has been long confined to her room by illness. There is at least one chamber in that house where the voice of anger is never heard—where the thoughts take a gentle, and sometimes a lofty tone. The wife drops her acrid criticism as she enters it, and spares even her next-door neighbour; and for the boisterous husband, I have known him walk a mile out of his way in the keen March wind to bring the first primrose, or the first violet, to the imprisoned invalid. He knew where the earliest grew, and would have been not a little vexed if any one had discovered his secret, and anticipated him in his trivial gift. A man mostly absorbed in money-making, in his calculations of profit and loss, lends himself wholly to this slight but disinterested service.

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Yet not altogether so slight. To her who could no longer seek them herself where they grow on the green earth, and in the fresh air, and beneath the rolling clouds, what an intense, an exquisite pleasure this little gift would bring! He has told me himself that she wept with joy when she saw them. The tears were very near his own eyes when he told me this. And mark how contrast and limitation heighten our pleasure: to the pale prisoner the scent and beauty of a thousand flowers were concentrated in a solitary primrose, pale almost as herself. To prisoners of a certain stamp, a few simple joys, shut in with them in their cell, shall expand till they fill the whole capacity for enjoyment.

From pain we are easily led to the dread of pain, to the resentment that follows upon pain, to anger, hatred, fear, and all the list of depressing and inflammatory passions—dire inmates to the human breast which admits them too readily, or retains them too long. Yet what passion is there which in its due degree and place is not serviceable to happiness, or is not

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a happiness itself? What we call bad passions, owe their badness to a defective state of the intelligence, as when emulation becomes envy in narrow minds, or love becomes jealousy. What fundamental passion is there of the human mind that you would eradicate? Not revenge. You know that this is needful to self-preservation; you know that when it is felt sympathetically, it becomes a noble indignation, summoning defenders round the weak against the strong. But the passion, you urge, that prompted the injury which has to be revenged—this might be eradicated, and then all would be peace. What is that assailant? What the passion that commences the strife, and gives the first blow? It may be *any* passion that has not learned its limits, and it has to learn its limits by this very retaliation it provokes. It may be cupidity, and cupidity in itself is but the desire for some good. Or it may be the love of power, the desire of governing others, and making them subject to our will. And you will pause long before you eradicate this love of power. Here also there is a

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passion which has to learn its limits from the resistance it meets with. Amongst the various tempers of men, some prompt to govern and direct, and some to seek the guidance and the government of others. The more you examine the constitution of society, and the origin of its government, the less disposed will you be to interfere with this natural difference in the temper and passions of men.

Then, again, consider how the rudest passions of our nature become, in the progressive development of man, refined—how they enter into new combinations—and perhaps what seemed base in itself becomes an essential element of a noble sentiment. No passion, at first sight, appears more degrading than fear; yet fear, by some admixture of thought, becomes reverence—becomes moral responsibility—enters into the sentiment of duty. If the ill opinion of others had excited no fear in us, the control which a society exercises by turns over each of its members could have had no existence; the moral opinion or force of society could have had no existence. So anger, which

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leads, in the first instance, to wild injustice, gives to the advanced mind that moral indignation without which there could be no strength of character.

To these transmutations we may revert again, but neither here nor elsewhere could I hope to exhaust the subject. Nor is it needful. The reader will himself supply additional illustrations.

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CHAPTER II.

TOO MUCH EVIL.

What, then, we call evil—pain of body and mind—is an inseparable part of the great whole of human life. If this solution is not altogether consolatory, one thing is clear,—that it excludes certain other imaginary solutions. We cannot say, as the old Persian theology is reputed to have said, that good and evil are the creation of two antagonistic spirits. Being parts of one scheme, if we introduce two or more *creative spirits*, we must, at all events, presume that they acted in harmony. A spirit or being, *itself created* by another, cannot, of course, be the original author of evil.

There is no resistance to our will which may not, in some sense, be pronounced to be an

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evil, and yet the very exercise of power implies the idea of resistance. You could not even wield the stick within your hand unless it presented a resistance to your hand. All moral or mental power is exhibited by conquering some resistance — some error, or some misplaced passion.

Is this necessary presence of some element we call by the name of evil, inconsistent with the idea of progress? By no means. We diminish the amount, and alter the nature of our evils; we exalt, we multiply what is good. Nor is there any fear that by our progress we should deprive our energies of their needful stimulant of dreaded evil. For, say, some misery like that of poverty, or that form of disease which originates in foul air and bad food, should by wise co-operation be kept at bay— the enemy is still at our gates, and will return upon us if we remit our vigilance. We may have built our dikes, and won a smiling territory from the wasteful sea; but unless we also keep our dikes in repair, the ocean will be on us again, and inflict far more misery than it

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could have done before we had made our conquest. It is worth noticing that, as we advance in knowledge and in arts, we act more and more on prospective or precautionary grounds, and less from the immediate stimulant of pain or want; and our impulses partake more largely of hope than of fear.

"Yes, yes!" I think I hear my impatient reader exclaim, "we admit all this. Pain, the conservator of life, the stimulant to action, the exalter of pleasure by the contrast it supplies, could not be dispensed with. We admit, too, that every heroism in the world would fall flat unless supported by its antagonistic evil; and we clearly perceive that our highest thoughts and emotions are in part *composed* of grief and indignation, sorrow and disappointment. All the fine arts, as well as all the virtues—eloquence, poetry, and music—claim kindred to sorrow as well as to joy. We admit all this. But we say that there is *too much* of this element of evil. It seems to us that there is much bodily pain and much torture of mind that might so easily be spared. If there is no

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nerve, sometimes yielding pleasure and sometimes pain, which we should venture to eradicate from our system, we cannot but think that the conditions of life might be so modified as to call forth less frequently its faculty of suffering. If there is no passion we could altogether erase without degrading the entire man, there is surely a disproportionate intensity of many of them, from which we might be relieved. There is too much evil. Passions are too violent, wants are too agonising, pains and distresses are too numerous, too persistent, too intense."

The complaint is natural. Who of us has not made it in the day of his sorrow or his indignation? But consider this, that it lies in the very nature of pain and suffering that we do, and must, complain of it. Whatever the degree in which it presents itself, it must always seem *too much.* It is always, from the nature of the case, the element we wish away—that stands out against us as repugnant and superfluous.

No animal, and certainly not man himself,

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could be trusted with the modification or reconstruction of his own life. He would at once and for ever reject what is repugnant, and in so doing unnerve his whole existence. Every animal that has to seek its food would bargain for a regular supply, and near at hand; yet with those who have great powers of locomotion the irregularity and uncertainty of supply is connected with the exercise of their peculiar faculties. What would become of all the birds of the air—where the glory of their outstretched and untiring pinions—if it were not for that seeming precariousness of supply, which doubtless they would themselves complain of, and which even benevolent men have contemplated with some dismay and distress? We men, for our own parts, are in the habit of saying that it is well for us that we cannot always predict the future—that there should be abundant play for hope, and curiosity, and surprise. Nevertheless this uncertainty is a state which each one for himself would constantly remove if he could. He *must* wish to read the future while he is still in the anxious present.

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That there is a general feeling of *too much evil,* is not, therefore, a proof that this element is in excess, viewed as part of the whole; because, from its nature, it is always that which is felt to be *too much.*

Nevertheless this question of degree is one which may legitimately be raised, if only one could grapple with it. A calm and all-seeing spectator of human affairs might discuss such a question. We stand ourselves in this predicament:—If our knowledge is not sufficient to enable us to pronounce that it is *not* in excess (an opinion to which, from the general harmony of nature, one may be disposed to lean), it is certainly not sufficient to entitle us to assert that it *is* in excess.

How can man, the sufferer, trust himself to form any decision upon the *degree* in which pain and pleasure should be diffused over the whole world? How can he know that passions less violent, wants less painful, distresses less extensive, would have answered the purposes for which passion, want, and distress have been called in? He knows this, that he

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should always give his judgment in favour of the *something less.*

I ask of no man to be contented with the amount of evil existing at any time, in any age or country. It is the nature of evil to prompt opposition to it. The more intelligence there is in man, the more vigorous and effectual the opposition it will prompt. The greatest of all calamities is the contentment that sits down at peace with a remediable evil.

But how can I measure the degree of that stimulant necessary to call forth those energies by which we progress? It would be very hard to grapple with this question of degree. Let me recall the effect produced by the political economists, with Malthus at their head, demonstrating the tendency of population to outstrip the means of subsistence. To keep this tendency in check has appeared to some reasoners the great problem, or the great despair, of sociology. But all men, and certainly all political economists, must admit that the tendency of population to press upon the means of subsistence has been, and still is, a

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most essential stimulant to the labour and ingenuity of man. The tendency, you say, is too strong. Who has proved that it is too strong? It is most desirable that a people who have come to the age of reflection, and amongst whom industry no longer requires the immediate spur of want, should be called upon to exercise prudence in the matter of marriage. And we see that its attention *is* called to this momentous subject, and a suitable modification of the moral opinion of society is taking place. But who shall say that the tendency by which population increases has been too strong for the purpose it has had to accomplish? By it the earth has been peopled, has been cultivated, and the colonisation of uninhabited regions still depends on this pressure of population upon subsistence. And we see that when men become calculating and prudent in other matters, they become prudent in this matter also. We know that the pressure of population upon food is far less severe in thickly peopled and industrious countries, than amongst the scanty

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populations of semi-barbarous regions. On the whole, we may safely assert that this pressure becomes less and less painful just as it becomes less and less the imperative motive of human industry. The same increasing intelligence which enriches and exalts human life, will prevent its own work from being destroyed by a too great flood of population. The alarm has been sounded—not prematurely, because it must take many ages before all ranks of society can be reached by it—but quite in time; for the civilised nations of Europe have still large territory open to them—delicious climates and fruitful soils—both to the east and to the west. Nor can it be known how far their own soil admits of improved culture. A thinly inhabited country may feel the pinch of hunger as severely as a more populous country. Say that in this early stage it had sought relief by limiting its population, it would for ever have remained a thinly inhabited, poor, and uncivilised country.

Passions, you say, are too violent. Certainly in this or that man too violent; in that other,

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perhaps, too feeble. No one is, in all respects, a perfect character. And here we encounter another of Nature's great beneficent laws or tendencies. Everywhere variety. Throughout all the animal creation what endless variety! One type is seen to be developing itself into every possible modification. And between man and man, between mind and mind, the same inexhaustible variety. Nothing is apt to strike us with more admiration than this diversity of human character, coupled as it is with certain great similitudes. And if these great resemblances between man and man are absolutely necessary for the foundation of any human society, or any code of morals (since if the same things did not generally give pleasure and pain, there could be no general law for human conduct), it is equally true that the differences between man and man give to all human societies their vivacity, their movement, and the mental activity that distinguishes them. I half suspect that, if a man were suddenly to be plunged into a society where every one was exactly

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like himself, he would go mad. The ennui would be intolerable. Losing all sense of contrast, he would be in danger of losing his sense of individuality; his very personality would grow dim to him. Be that as it may, this variety of character—of powers, temperaments, habits—is of infinite importance, and essential to the progress of humanity. And how could this variety exist, if in every individual the passions were mingled in what we should pronounce perfect proportions? The existence of this diversity of human character is manifestly incompatible with the frequent attainment of an ideal standard of perfection. One man is strict in calling others to account, vindictive in his justice, earnest in punishing offenders. Too earnest, you say—too vindictive. But his amiable neighbour is too lenient, too compassionate, or else, out of very indolence, far too ready to forgive offences by which he does not personally suffer. The vindictiveness of the one is balanced by the amiability or indolence of the other. Much better, you say, that all should have the same tem-

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perate and unyielding sentiment of public justice, by which laws for the public welfare are sustained; but how expect the same energetic yet equable sentiment in men of different tempers, who have been, moreover, subjected to the also beneficially varied circumstances of life? Sometimes the one character is plainly the complement of the other,—as where one man is submissive, and claims guidance and protection; and another is of the dominating order, exercising control, and skilful in organising.

Do considerations of this kind lead us to tolerate all character, alike good and bad, kind and cruel? Not at all. There are certain great subjects, on which men think and feel sufficiently alike to form a strong moral opinion, which is constantly coercing individual peculiarities or eccentricities. Coupled with this diversity of character is a general acceptance of certain great truths, and a general desire to force these truths upon our neighbours.

We conclude, therefore, that the *too much* of pain and painful emotion can only be asserted

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by one who, after surveying the whole of human life, could confidently pronounce that a less degree of that which in *any* degree is odious, would have been equally compatible with all the advantages that are complicated with pain and painful emotions.

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CHAPTER III.

MORAL EVIL.

Perhaps the reader relinquishes this question of *degree*, and limits his objection, or his perplexity, to one *kind* of evil—moral evil, crime, sin. Pain and painful emotions he can understand as having a fit place in God's creation—do they not practise us in fortitude and other virtues? But pain given with vicious intention by one man to another—this must surely be attributed to some diabolic agency. How can the God who punishes sin have also ordained its existence? How reconcile our notions of the justice of God with the belief that man is in all respects the creature of God? This, with many minds, is the great difficulty that besets our subject.

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That which, amongst animals or idiots, is mere hurt and injury, becomes moral evil, becomes crime or sin, to intelligent man occupied with the interests of society or the presumed judgments of God. Evil, therefore, becomes moral evil — how? by the development of human reason. And a pleasure-giving act becomes moral goodness by the same development of intelligence. We have not here to speak of any absolutely new passion: what has converted evil into moral evil is the elevation of other parts of our nature. The intentional acts of men become *moral evil* because they are performed or contemplated by beings capable of moral judgments. Whether you pronounce these judgments to be the result of a special moral faculty, or describe them as the reason judging for the welfare of the whole community, it is still sufficiently plain that evil becomes moral evil by the addition of these judgments. It is the result of this higher or peculiar development of the human mind, that to injure another, under certain circumstances, becomes moral evil. We see by this

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simple statement the utter impossibility of ascribing simple pain or evil to the Creator of the world, and *moral evil* to some other and diabolic agent. The evil being there, the conversion of it into moral evil marked our advancement.

You say that the passions, motives, energies of man ought to be uniformly controlled by reason or conscience. Why, then, has a world been formed in which they are not always so controlled ?

But unless there had been passions needing control, capable of leading to violent and mischievous actions, how could this moral restraint have been brought into existence ? It is because we *have* to check and regulate both ourselves and each other that there is such a thing as morality at all. No theorem in Euclid is more clear than this, that moral good and moral evil start into existence together. Reason and conscience are themselves developments from the experience of the good and evil of life. The moment reason and conscience are thus developed, good and evil have become

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moral good and moral evil. The creation of man as a moral being involves the necessity of moral evil.

Let us first suppose that all men acted spontaneously (whether from instinct or perfectly balanced passions) in that manner which was best for the whole. Here it is plain there would be no room for the development of our moral sentiments. A perfect code of morality might be *acted,* but not from the sentiments of moral responsibility, duty, merit. Rules of conduct would be as unnecessary to such a race as to the ant or the bee: there would be no conflict between the present passion, or immediate interest of the individual, and the reason judging for the interest of the whole community. Conscience, describe it how you will, would be latent, undeveloped. Let us next suppose that there was such amount of irregularity and mischief in the spontaneous actions of men as to develop the conscience, as to suggest the making of laws or rules, and affixing a penalty of some kind to their infraction; and let us suppose that the moment such

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rules were made — the moment that a conscience was developed, and *good* and *bad* conduct became, therefore, *right* and *wrong* conduct—that all the bad conduct now stigmatised as wrong, vicious, immoral, immediately ceased. Here obedience to the rule is supposed at once to become universal—at once to reach its maximum in every individual. But who sees not that the supposition is utterly at variance with all the great facts of human nature—with the force of habit, with the gradual formation of definite and universally received laws? And if such a violent supposition could be gravely discussed—if, the moment a moral judgment were formed, the evil on which it pronounced altogether ceased —I am at a loss to conceive how, in such a state of things, where all would be equally obedient to the moral law, there could be any feeling of merit, any glow of virtue, any praise given or received.

Granting that such a uniformity of moral conduct is desirable, it is plainly impossible that it could be produced *suddenly*. What, in

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the nature of things, is founded on experience, must be preceded by the requisite experience. If a race of thinking beings is to act from a rule of reason or intelligence—that is, from generalised experience—there must have been a process of thought or experiment carried on, and carried on through several generations. Man injures himself and his fellow-man by his ignorance and passion. From many ill results of these he learns temperance, he learns equity. These virtues are, from their very nature, *to be learnt* from the experience of good and evil, and will be learnt gradually. Turn the subject how you will, moral good could not exist unless its counterpart of moral evil also existed, or had existed. This truth is self-evident, and yet it seems to be overlooked by those who repeatedly perplex themselves by asking, How could God be the author of moral evil? The great fact that ought to arrest their attention is, that God has been the author of a moral being. He has so arranged the circumstances life, and the powers and propensities of man, that the reason or judgment cultivated in this

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scene of pain and pleasure produces for us the sentiments of merit and duty.

I repeat that no refuge can be taken in any peculiar ethical theory. "Natural evil," says one reasoner, "becomes moral evil, because it is at once *felt* to be such. Man has a moral perception, an original faculty of conscience, by means of which he perceives certain conduct to be right and wrong, just as by his ordinary organs of perception he perceives things to be blue or red, round or square." In my apprehension, what is here called an original faculty of conscience is the judgment of our conduct according to rules that have grown up as the reason and affections of man developed themselves. I have explained this elsewhere, and may again find it necessary to go over this beaten yet intricate ground of ethical discussion. But adopt, if you can understand it, this theory of an innate moral perception, it is still clear that this faculty could not have its proper exercise, could not be developed, unless there were presented before it both moral evil and moral good.

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That natural evil has become moral evil, is the sign of man's advancement, and immense superiority above all other living creatures. Beasts injure and destroy each other, and we call this a natural evil. It would be a like natural evil in man, but that his higher reason condemns it. He compares such injury and destruction with peaceful and beneficent conduct: he approves the one, condemns the other.

God, then, is the author of moral evil—in what way? By a development of the reason of man He has enabled him to compare conduct with conduct, result with result—enabled him to approve and condemn.

All this is very clear. But why, then, it is asked, does God PUNISH moral evil, if He created it?

There are two theories abroad on the nature of divine punishments.

If the divine punishments (whether judicial, or consisting of penalties brought out by the operation of the laws already established) have for their end the guidance of men, and of so-

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cieties of men, here or hereafter, then these divine punishments are but means to carry on the progressive development of the human species. The whole scheme is still in harmony in all its parts. There is no difficulty in God's both creating and punishing moral evil. He creates it by the additional intelligence He gives to man: that is, He has raised in man a desire to combat evil. He fosters or enlightens that desire by affixing penalties where man has declined this combat.

If, according to another theory, God punishes sin simply because it *is* sin—simply from a supposed repugnance or hostility to moral evil, without any regard to the *results* of punishment—then I admit that it is impossible to reconcile such notions of God's justice with the fact that God is the creator of the world. But this last theory of divine punishments is not, I believe, the one generally received.

Perhaps in the general mind there is some confused notion of *retributive justice*, which would be found difficult to reconcile with the faith equally general, that God made all man-

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kind, and the whole of our humanity. But the theory that God, from the necessity of His nature, must punish sin as sin, without regard to the beneficent result of the punishment itself, is one which would be only formally set forth by a peculiar class of theologians. It matters not, however, whether that class of theologians be large or small; it is a theory utterly irreconcilable with the belief in one supreme, creative, and beneficent Intelligence.

In one sense of the word, God creates *no* evil.

I said that I had no paradox to put forth, yet the conclusion to which we are inevitably led can hardly be expressed in terms which do not sound paradoxical.

There is no evil in the sum of things—no evil in the relation which any one thing bears to the great whole, as it develops itself in space and time. The evil that man endures is evil, at the time, to him; he has to resist it, and by resistance to rise in the scale of virtue and intelligence. And that which is evil in the individual man, and which must every-

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where be followed by its penal consequences, is yet not evil to an eye that could embrace the whole development of humanity. If pain and pleasure together make a happier and far richer world than pleasure only—if passions regulated by individual reason, and by laws made by reasonable communities for their common guidance, form together a far higher world than would be produced by a set of uniform, imperative intuitions, or by harmonious appetites and passions that needed no control,—then, surely, we are justified in asserting that the presence of what we inevitably call evil, or moral evil, is not inconsistent with the proposition that the whole is good. God, the creator of the whole, has created only for the good of the whole.

Universal laws and powers—the whole of nature—or that Supreme Reason by which alone we can represent to ourselves the unity of nature—*this* declares itself on the side of happiness, and on the side of goodness, as both the highest happiness and the permanent guardian of happiness. Since in the entire scheme

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of creation evil is subordinate to good, and humanity is the greater, and rises to higher and higher development owing to this admixture of good and evil, it follows that we cannot say of the Author of the entire scheme that He has created for any other purpose than good. Nothing is evil in relation to the whole. And this becomes more impressed upon us when we regard humanity in its progressive character, and see how one generation is developed from another—how inevitably necessary the experience of many ages is to the wisdom of mankind—how the fierce pleasures and fantastic errors of one period are but the conditions of the calmer joys and more rational beliefs of a subsequent period.

We live under this Supreme Reason, not under a Being beneficent in the manner of a sympathetic man, who weeps at every calamity, rushes ever to the rescue, and burns at every injury. We live under a Supreme Intelligence, who has created in us, by the very spur of want, an intelligential power that combats with want. The presence of both good

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and evil is the condition of our intelligence; and, again, this aroused intelligence has for its office to multiply and exalt the good, and as much as possible to subdue the evil.

All the several parts of our creation form *one* scheme, and that scheme is beneficent. I am entitled to say this, although I am not entitled to say that other schemes of which I know nothing may not result in greater happiness and higher intelligence. If I had seen but one animal, I should be justified in admiring the harmony of its organisation, and the vivacity and pleasure of its movements, although I certainly should not have been entitled to say that an animal of still greater power, or beauty, or vivacity, could not have been created.

All who battle for the good are, in the language of a natural piety, the *children of God.* They are ranged on the side of goodness, or the production of happiness, and they also receive into their hearts, as their indisputable reward, the highest sentiments of happiness.

If evil in some form or degree is eternally

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with us, this or that evil is not always necessary; often it invites us to remedy or remove it by individual or combined efforts. Already some great evils that have afflicted society belong, with us, to the past; others are prompting us forward by intimations that they also are vulnerable to attack.

Yes, and there are irremediable evils!—death and doubt, limitation to existence, limitation to knowledge. Such evils, I think, as have this character of being irremediable stamped upon them, are those also whose *permanent* place in human life seems distinctly justified by the nature of the whole.

Something we must add on both classes, the remediable and the irremediable—something we must also say of evil, as it is modified in our view by a belief in progress, and then we close this brief exposition.

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CHAPTER IV.

REMEDIABLE EVILS, OR MAN PROGRESSIVE.

> "Observe—it had not much
> Consoled the race of mastodons to know
> Before they went to fossil, that anon
> Their place would quicken with the elephant;
> They were not elephants, but mastodons,
> And I—a man as men are now, and not
> As men may be hereafter—feel with men
> In the agonising present."

So sings, and wisely, the authoress of 'Aurora Leigh.' The pleasures of the coming elephant could not reconcile the mastodon to any trials he had to endure. I certainly could not attempt to console the present generation—if it needed to be consoled—by pointing to the superior happiness which will probably be attained by some subsequent generation. To bid one portion of the race to lie down patiently, as it were, in the breach, that another portion

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may pass over it into the citadel, might not be thought very kindly or acceptable advice.

The idea of progress is a vast *addition* to the present life of all thinking men: to know that each age works not only for itself, but for its successor, aggrandises our conception of the whole of humanity; but each age has in itself its own completeness, its own harmonies, its own content. If it were not so—if the nature of life were to be miserable hitherto—I know not by what line of argument we should have ever established our idea of progress. Progress is not directly from bad to good, but from some good to a greater—from knowledge to knowledge, from effort to effort.

Neither the idea of progress nor the doctrine of immortality, however much they add to the grandeur of our present lives by the emotions they occasion, or by the sublime views of human nature they justify, can be legitimately introduced as *consolations* for the miseries of the world at large. I know it is common to offer as consolation for the sufferings of this life the happiness of another. But the same reli-

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gious faith which offers this consolation, immediately afterwards limits it to the sufferings of the virtuous and the pious, or even to such of *their* sufferings as were due to their virtue or piety. Need I say how inadequate a consolation this is to the miseries of all the various classes of mankind? Men, it is true, may be contented with their lives upon the whole, and yet like to receive consolation for some unhappy portion of them; and to pious men this doctrine of a future life may offer the consolations they require. But, looking over the world at large, it is manifest that the greatest amount of misery is felt by those who, it is understood, are *not* entitled to the compensation of a happy futurity. Their greatest misery is, that neither virtue nor piety have been cultivated within them.

But to return to the idea of terrestrial progress — men extended their interest over the future of a human society even before our modern belief in progress had been developed. A Roman built for posterity, though he hoped for nothing higher than the continuance and stability of the Roman commonwealth.

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Standing where we now do in the annals of time, we look back upon the past with a conviction that each age, while labouring and enjoying for itself, has been laying the foundation for higher labour and enjoyment in some future age. At least this has been always true of *some* nation, and what is done by one people is done for all the earth.

Now, if any one should here ask, Why could not the last stage of human perfection have been at once attained? the answer is at hand. We have to repeat that human knowledge or wisdom is, from its very nature, built on that human experience which intervenes between the first and the last. You may perhaps conceive of some other kind of excellence; but this human excellence is, from its nature, the result of experience. How then could it *be* without that experience?

If our *spontaneity* had from the first left us nothing to desire, we should never have been reflective beings at all. We should never have reflected, I mean, upon our own lives, whatever we might have done upon inanimate nature.

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Reflection comes in with comparison, with preference, with approval, and disapproval. It is, in fact, another term for comparison of a complex character.

It is also plain that the reflection which a society makes upon its social or political organisation must need the various experiences of *several ages.* I state this to show that it is a necessity of the case that one age should be subservient to another; it does not follow that either age is incomplete in itself. The progress may be "from harmony to harmony," from one organisation to another organisation.

Our latest social and political institutions might have been adopted at once, as the earliest may have been, by spontaneous impulses, with very little reflection; but in that case they could not have been what they now are, the products of experience, and the constant subjects for the exercise of reason. Suppose we were all agreed that a representative form of government was the very best for human societies; how could such form of government be adopted by us, as reasonable

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creatures, aware of its advantages, if men had not lived under other forms also, and if we were not capable of drawing a comparison between those other forms and this? We might, you say, have at once instituted such a government, guided by instinctive impulse; and if so, we should have lived under it as ants and bees under their form of polity, whatever that may be.

Progress is brought about by the energy of man, which energy is also his highest felicity. The age which, in any way, has fought and conquered for its successor, would perhaps be considered the more fortunate of the two if its successor had not also its own strife—strife at least to retain what had been thus acquired for it. The times of great wars and religious persecutions are not pre-eminently unhappy. In the first place, there were thousands whom the war or persecution never reached—who laboured, loved, and married, and saw their children grow up in play about their knees. And, in the next place, those who were engaged in the war or persecution had their own fierce

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delights of doing, and suffering, and defying the power that would crush them. I pity no one whose spirit is still unsubdued, who still combats, and resists, and strives.

I have said something elsewhere* of the evolution and development of human society and of human knowledge; I have endeavoured to show how it is that we necessarily proceed, through the mere dictates of passion and force, to forms of society that are based on reflection, and through imaginative errors to truths that wear a scientific form. Slavery, war, despotism, religious persecution, are evils which we have already partly outlived. Evils we from our position rightly pronounce them to be, yet each of them had its adaptation to the epoch in which it was found to exist, and each had a function to perform preparatory to a subsequent and happier era. Where they still exist, they still have the like adaptation.

One illustration must here suffice. War is already, and has long been, proclaimed to be an evil of the first magnitude, and forward-

* In the latter part of 'Thorndale.'

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looking men anticipate a time when the disputes of nations will be decided by a *society of nations*, represented in some council or congress. Meanwhile we are, as a people, still in that condition when we enjoy the fierce delights of war. Nay, we read lectures to each other on the moral benefits arising out of the bold profession of arms. And, at all events, there is a general persuasion that this great framer of states, this founder of nationalities, has not yet done its work. Wars of conquest and of self-defence have hitherto assisted at the formation of every well-knit community. The opposition from *without* has made the elements cohere *within*.

Or perhaps religious persecution may afford us a better and more instructive illustration. Here our condemnation is still more decisive; and the evil, in its virulence, is regarded by us in England as belonging to the past. Yet the action of the state, or the civil power, in upholding, amongst increasing multitudes, a faith generally beneficial to those multitudes, is still recognised as a valuable element in our Euro-

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pean societies. That action has changed its character, and become more humane, and takes as often the form of bribery as of persecution. In a rude age, which at once, on all subjects, appealed to force, it inevitably assumed a rude and violent character. Men were put to death for not believing, or not professing, that national creed which had been made the basis of national education.

If such a national creed, not founded on scientific knowledge, not capable in itself of fixing the belief of multitudes, has been upheld in this its useful, educational function by the power of the state, we must not altogether quarrel with religious persecution. At the same time, the more thinking part of a nation will outgrow such creeds. The martyr and the rebel inevitably appear upon the stage. Then new conceptions are gradually formed of the part which the state ought to take upon itself in this matter of religious belief. Each epoch thus brings about the state-action that is fitted for it.

Very terrible scenes may be, and have been,

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enacted in the *transition.* Men are divided by the direst animosities; each party appears to the other in the blackest of colours, and yet each party is sustained by the very highest emotions of conscience and religious faith.

There is a toleration for the persecutor we have yet to learn. I was lately reading the History of Philip II. and the grand revolt of the Netherlands. What indignation I felt against the Spanish tyrant! And indeed we Protestants must hate this despot. And yet, I asked myself, is it reasonable to lay upon one man, as his crime, the fanaticism of a whole people and the tradition of ages? A great idea prevailed, it predominated entirely in Spain, it had prevailed generally over European society. It was the idea of a universal church, out of which salvation for the souls of men was impossible. Kings as well as priests, and mobs as well as kings, were possessed with this idea. Scholars, soldiers, magistrates, all held themselves charged to maintain it, to write, to fight, and adjudicate for its support. The error of all is the reproach of none. This Philip II.

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is pre-eminently the great and pious king of pious Catholics. Possessed of highest power, on him devolves the severest task. The sword is in his hand, and he must strike. This morose and superstitious king is, before all others, the slave to our great idea.

But in one part of his dominions this great idea is disputed and dethroned. I see the enlightened and wealthy cities of Holland suffering every calamity that war and famine can inflict, rather than deny the new truth that has sprung up in them. They will not surrender their convictions. Rather let the sea take back their land, rather let the fires of martyrdom consume their bodies. Return stroke for stroke, you brave Dutchmen! Bear all, inflict all, rather than surrender! Would that you could bind this monarch and fling him over your dikes, and be free to worship how you will!

But now, when the fight is over and the combatants numbered with the dead, on whom are we to pass judgment? Not on the zealot king, not on the zealot citizen. They are gone

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from before our judgment-seat, with all their antagonistic energies and repugnant duties. They have left only for our contemplation a contest between two great ideas.

All that remains for us is to congratulate ourselves on the new views that have become prevalent as to the duty of the state in the matter of religion. But here we perceive our age may justly congratulate itself, and yet not condemn or affect to pity its predecessor. An enlightened people, a people whose minds are generally active, *will* put forth a variety of beliefs; and this very activity of mind becomes a substitute for that state authority which it resists. Amongst such a people the action of the state is necessarily and wisely limited. Did such mental activity become still more general, the action of the state might be altogether withdrawn. All this is subject for sincere congratulation. But if I am to look back candidly into some past era, I must see there also a certain harmony in the condition of things—a certain social organisation which is not unworthy of admiration. An ignorant, unreason-

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ing people are bound together, and have their minds guided and enriched by some state-protected faith, which, be its composition what it may, has in it the highest practical wisdom that the thinking few of mankind have hitherto attained. This, also, is not unworthy of an approving recognition.

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CHAPTER V.

THE IRREMEDIABLE.

It is spring-time with us here at Gravenhurst, and indeed over all Europe; trees are budding, birds are singing; there is the green and golden verdure on the woods, and over all how soft a sky! Before me are two lambs couching on the grass, and two little children standing together looking at them wonderingly, and thinking (I half suspect) that the two lambs are far more wonderful creatures than themselves.

No, it is not always spring at Gravenhurst or elsewhere; it is not always youth with man or beast. We have our winter, and old age, and death the inevitable. But therefore it is that we *can* have spring and childhood, and the

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sweet relation between the old inhabitants of the earth and the new born; the new-comer who is to be taught, protected, cherished, loved. Would you wish it otherwise? No leaf to wither and to fall, and no bud to come forth upon the branches. And no human bud. The same dry tree for ever; the same eternal man, neither young nor old. No glad anticipations, and no cherished memories; both lost in the actual and eternal repetition of a monotonous existence. I think, in our madness, we should wish the sun to fall out of heaven.

A few months ago I watched the last sere leaves trembling on the boughs, or heard them fall one by one through the bare branches. Now I see the same elms and oaks *starring* the blue air with their golden buds. The willow throws out a light chain of tender verdure—light chain of verdure that cannot fetter the youngest wind that is revelling in this bright May morning. But it fetters me. It arrests my step, my gaze; I should stay under it a willing captive, but that my beautiful twin poplars *must* be visited. They are awaking

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from their wintry dream, and I observe that they begin the summer with the same bright, flame-like tint with which they died down in autumn. Leaf by leaf they dropt their glory, leaf by leaf they resume it. And with the leaf comes the bird, hastening, with many a love-song, to build his nest. At first I hear a few brief low notes that are flung from bough to bough; they remind me of children's kisses, blown to each other through the air; then comes the whole tumult of melody and joy. Need I remind you that this perpetual renewal of spring, of youth, of love, of child and mother, has dark death for its necessary condition? The inevitable is also the indispensable.

How much of life should we lose if we lived perpetually! How stagnant would have been the condition of man! Supposing that habit had the same power that it has now (and without the power of habit we could not construct a human life at all), I cannot understand how a race of immortal men could have made much progress in knowledge or in the arts. A toler-

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able existence once secured, habit, customs, rooted beliefs, operating alike on all, would render change impossible; curiosity and the love of novelty would die out; life would become a fixed routine. I cannot conceive that this middle-aged immortal would ever keenly anticipate the future. Perhaps wonder itself would fade away from the face of things. And that eternity beyond life which death for ever points to, though he points to it so silently, would, of course, cease to be the great stimulant of man's sublimest thoughts and emotions. Nothing could be so fatal to human happiness as a terrestrial immortality. Indeed, it is hardly possible to form a distinct conception of so unnatural a condition. The *family*, with all its ties and interests and affections, would of course be extinct. What sentiments man might still retain towards his fellow-man, or the great external nature that surrounds him, would have lost their strength, their tenderness, their mystery.

A touch upon that brain, and farewell king! farewell poet! The greatest of human beings

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is at the mercy of the blind unconscious forces of the world. Any atom kills a man. But look again: turn from the west to the east, and the same king, and yet another—the same poet, and yet another, is treading the scene. Death was a mere mockery. Nothing kills the man. The blind unconscious atoms have for their mission his incessant reproduction.

Yet the fear of death lies on each individual creature, and on man especially; and ever as life increases in value must death become more detestable. And ever as life increases in value, as it becomes richer and richer in love and knowledge, does the thought of death play a greater and greater part in all that is noble or heroic in speculation or in action.

There is a fear of death—the dark side of a theology zealous for the promotion of human goodness and piety—cruelly zealous for the good—which I will not here touch upon. No justice could be done to the subject, unless the whole influence of that theology, viewed on its bright as well as its dark side, could be surveyed. But there is a natural fear of death which

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attends upon the love of life itself, and which must be considered as a permanent element of human existence. There must come a time when we shall cease to live, and, what is a still more painful thought, our dearest friends and those we love the most may depart before us. Natural sentiments of this kind must remain for ever with us.

Of the two causes of distress, the loss of our friends or relations gives far greater pain than the anticipation of our own decease. This last is a mournful sentiment that occasionally throws its shadow over the stream of life; but the unarrested stream flows on, and the shadow comes and goes, and seems to brighten the stream by the contrast that it brings. In health and vigour we think only of our purposes, and fill the future, as the present, with our pleasures and affections; and when, in the hours of our sadness, we dwell on the parting that must one day take place, even then it is the something prized and lovable that the mind is resting on, and the sentiment of antedated regret is half a pleasure. Poets in all ages

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have been accustomed to enhance the charms of dear and familiar scenes, by the pensive sentiment that we shall not always enjoy them; that the tree and the river will rustle and will flow for other ears and other eyes than ours—

> "No more by thee my steps shall be,
> For ever and for ever."

Doubtless there are many evils besides death that will be reckoned amongst the irremediable, as some forms of disease, accidents, and injuries received from the mistakes, as well as passions, of other men. Such evils, it will be said, may be diminished, not extirpated. Death is the wholly irremediable, and I point to it to show that this wholly irremediable is also the entirely indispensable.

There is one other evil which, even in this brief summary, I cannot leave unnoticed. No complaint has been more frequently reiterated than that against the ignorance of man, or the limitation of his knowledge. As all our progress resolves itself into some extension of knowledge, our ignorance should obviously be placed in the category of remediable evils. But

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then it happens that there is a certain kind of knowledge to which we aspire more ardently than to any other, and it is precisely in this department of knowledge that the limitations have appeared to man to be fixed, impassable. Some describe themselves as beating for ever against the bars of their prison-house. Here is another instance, it is said, of the wholly irremediable.

It is no legitimate subject of complaint that every accession of scientific knowledge brings with it some new want of knowledge—some new stimulant for further inquiry. It would be a great misfortune if it did not. As the circle of our knowledge extends, those whose eye is on the horizon must see the dark line of our ignorance extend also. This is not the complaint that you hear often from our philosophers. The lament that has been made in every age, and in no age more frequently than in our own, is, that there are certain great truths after which we are impelled to seek, and which yet for ever evade our grasp; that on certain subjects, where observation and ex-

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perience cease to be our guides—as the origin of the world, or the nature of God—the human mind inevitably thinks, and as inevitably thinks to little purpose. There is an impassable barrier, which, nevertheless, we are constantly striving to pass.

Is there indeed an ignorance of this description? Is there any subject on which men are impelled to think, yet on which we can pronounce that thought is, and always will be, unavailing?

Where one man is peering out into hopeless darkness, another tells you that he sees a glorious truth. Is the first obtuse, or is the second imaginative? The question is not easy to decide. I myself, if interrogated on the nature of God, should not say that all examination of this problem was hopeless. I should venture to reply, that as the world shapes itself in the intelligence of man, that human intelligence becomes a type, vague and imperfect, of one phase of that supreme Reason, which is conscious of the universe it creates. Other men would be able, I doubt not, to give a still more lucid

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answer. But let us suppose that no man could give an answer that would satisfy many minds, or satisfy his own for very long together; let us suppose that there is such an ignorance as we have been speaking of—an ignorance that is always felt, and which never can be removed —still I cannot consent to regard this ceaseless *effort* to overpass the boundary as itself an evil. Better this than an unconsciousness of our ignorance.

I am not bound to admit—I am not entitled to assert—that what are sometimes called the higher problems of philosophy—as questions of ontology or the absolute cause of all—are and must for ever remain insolvable. But if this were the case, our attempts to solve them cannot be regretted; they are connected with our highest intellectual energies and intellectual emotions. The constant attempt we are said to make to attain the unattainable, is a condition of things which implies that the mind as constantly *imagines* some solution—that it has an alternation of faith and doubt.

The state of the case, as put by the most

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desponding thinkers, is this: That while on these great subjects truth is not to be discovered, some men, or perhaps most men, at some period of their lives, *believe* they *have* discovered it. It is necessary to assume this, be cause if all men came to the same conclusion that search was unavailing, then the discrepancy between our wishes and our powers (which is here made the subject of lamentation) would cease, and men would live contented with their ignorance.

Attempts "to think the unthinkable" are not incessantly made, but on the assumption that some men believe that they succeed where others perceive failure to be inevitable. A mixture of doubt and faith in the same society, is therefore the final condition of things in which we are landed by those who take the most melancholy view of human knowledge. This mixture of doubt and faith is, at least, favourable to intellectual energy and our highest life.

The man who stands before Nature, and earnestly interrogates her and his own soul as to what they can report of God, is in a most

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solemn attitude of mind, but not necessarily a painful one. Let the response be uncertain, he still would not relinquish that attitude of mind under any bribe earth could offer; he would not relinquish it unless he would prefer to be a beast rather than a man. He is man pre-eminently when he stands in that attitude.

But a theme of this kind would lead too far. I will here bring to a close this didactic *Exposition*, and indulge myself and my readers in repeating some *Conversations* of my friends, which may less disagreeably tax their attention.

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CONVERSATIONS

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CONVERSATION I.

INEQUALITY OF HAPPINESS.

GENERAL MANSFIELD—ADA—SANDFORD.

WE three, General Mansfield, Ada, and myself (whom I will here call by the name of Sandford), were at the new villa which the General is building, and which, as the walls are now completed, already takes its place very picturesquely in the landscape. We sat on stumps of trees or blocks of timber that were still left upon what will be, when all is finished, the smoothest of lawns, but which was then long and rank grass. Workmen were busy around us; plans, folded and unfolded, lay upon the ground by our side, but we had ended our consultation of them for the day.

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Ada had been fixing her eye upon a dull shambling boy who was there to assist the workmen. The boy's great eyes—let the light fall upon them from what object it might—had always the same passive stare, expressed nothing—seemed, for their part, to be always gazing, vacant into vacancy. "How difficult it is," she said, suddenly breaking our silence, "to enter into the minds of men and women whose condition is very different from our own! I feel a certain amazement and awe when I think what strangers we are to each other. I know next to nothing of yonder boy, and he as little of me. I might as well be in the presence of one of the dumb animals: I have, indeed, the same puzzled, painful feeling as when I look into the face of my dog, or my pony, trying to spell out *their* thoughts. Well, I hope they are all happy according to their several capacities. And where the capacity for happiness is little, the capacity for misery is equally limited. Yonder boy, I think, will never know the heartache. What say you, uncle, to the remark so often made,

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that, balancing both our pains and pleasures, the lot of all men is nearly equal,—much joy, much anguish—little pleasure, little pain?"

MANSFIELD.

I see a vague feeling of equity in this desire to find the lots of all men equal. Nature has an equity of her own, which does not seem to be precisely of this description. She fits each creature for the part he has to play; but I do not see that she pledges herself, through all her living creatures, to keep the same proportions of sweet and bitter, to compensate always so much pain with so much pleasure, or to weigh out so much pleasure against so much pain.

I will venture to make one observation. A keen susceptibility, apart from other qualities, may expose a man to as much misery as happiness. But if to keen susceptibility is added an energetic active temper, such a man will, under all ordinary circumstances, enjoy far more than he suffers; because an energetic temper seeks out for happiness, and throws off its disappointments and chagrins. Such a man

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enjoys largely, while the sting of any calamity is soon lost in some earnest fresh endeavour. A poor, thin, weak, passive nature has no strength to conquer a new happiness, and sits down in hopeless captivity to the present affliction. It is some compliment to human life to say that the more complete a man's character, —the fuller its development on all sides—the will, the intellect, the affections—the more certainly will the proportion be in his favour of happiness over misery. 'Tis life—

"More life, and fuller, that we want."

SANDFORD.

We know only one man's life very intimately—our own—and we forget a great deal of that. It is difficult, therefore, to compare the entire lives of two different men, because we can so rarely determine in what proportions the several elements of happiness have really mingled in them. But there is no difficulty in estimating certain elements of human happiness, and preferring them to others. Of two modes of enjoyment I may confidently

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say that one transcends the other immeasurably. I may assert this because my own experience is confirmed by the general testimony of mankind. Thus I can say without hesitation, that the happiness due to our amiable affections is greater than the fierce pleasure of hatred or revenge. Every one who has felt the two agrees in this estimate. I can say that the satisfaction of acting according to my own reason, and with the approbation of my fellow-men, gives a higher and more permanent felicity than the gratification of any one passion could do. I can say that steady, habitual, persevering occupation is the source of more pleasure than what we call amusements. Such estimates, being generally assented to, lie at the groundwork of our moral opinion.

ADA.

And if we can do thus much, we can also say with confidence of two men that one is happier than the other, since in the one the higher elements are more developed than in the other.

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MANSFIELD.

Certainly in many cases—in cases quite numerous enough to disprove this theory of an essential equality in human lives. Nevertheless, as Sandford suggests, there would be a difficulty in many other cases of comparing two lives, from our ignorance of the proportion in which the higher and lower elements were really developed in each. Besides, if we are curious in this matter, we might be called upon to compare *one* higher gratification with *many* of a lower description ; we should have sometimes to puzzle ourselves by balancing *quality* against *quantity*. I have seen an Indian prince in his palace, served by slaves and courtiers all anxious to procure him any new pleasure that he or they could devise, and I have known him child enough to be thoroughly amused with his pampered, ostentatious, and quite sensuous mode of existence. I have left his palace, and met the poor Brahmin, whose poverty was ennobled by his voluntary acceptance of it. "To feed upon a little rice—to drink only water—to have nothing but one's

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bent arm to rest the head upon"—such, in his own language, was his choice. Can I measure the pride and tranquillity of the sacred and somewhat monotonous pauper with the other kind of pride, and the numerous pleasures of the silly and inflated prince?

ADA.

The Brahmin! the Brahmin! The sacred and monotonous pauper for me!

MANSFIELD.

Or, taking our present example, how could I compare the stolidity of yonder lumbering boy with the flippant pleasures and absurd vexations of some fine lady who would look at him with affected amazement through her eyeglass? One thing I know, that that lumbering fellow has no more wish to be the fine lady, than the fine lady to be transformed into the sturdy, bepatched, bewildered lout. She is not aware of it, but he grins at her in return for that fastidious glance through the eyeglass? The snail and the butterfly are both content. They

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neither could nor *would* be anything else than snail or butterfly. In a word, where variety is the rule, if not the necessity, what more could any living creature claim than this contentment with his own existence? This is nature's equity, not any universally-sustained proportion of the good and the ill.

ADA.

Men are not always, nor often, contented with their lot; but I know what you mean—they are always contented with *themselves.* They cannot wish to *be* another man; they may wish to add to their own possessions another's wealth or another's knowledge; they rest in their own individuality.

Yes; and this individuality is, in the main, so connected with the circumstance in which, and by which, it has grown up, that it carries with it a general feeling of contentment with the external lot also. It is a curious thing to reflect upon, this individuality or personality. This *I myself* must, of course, in the first place, consist of my own soul and body, one or both

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of which have some distinctive power or temperament. But still, this self of mine, as *I know it*, is the result of these powers and temperaments acting and acted on through a long train of circumstances. I am what my past life has made me. I am the memories and the thoughts that have grown up here in Gravenhurst, and which could have grown up nowhere else. Being the product of my past life, I am prepared to live the present. So that, if a man has not been wrenched suddenly from one station to another—if the current of his life has not been violently broken—the past has always fitted him for the present. I find great comfort in this wide generalisation. I am my past life, and am therefore fitted for what lies before me. "Thank God!" says some good man to me, "that you were not born a savage. You might have been born a Fiji, or *Fijienne*, and been married to a man who, when he was tired of your society, would have baked you and eaten you." I hope I do thank God for my existence; but *I* could not have been a Fiji, or anything of the sort. There might have been

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one savage the more, and one Englishwoman the less, but that additional savage (I hope she would have been contented with her lot) would not have been *me*. I and my own life are inseparable.

SANDFORD.

I too find great comfort in your wide generalisation. Every living thing is born, and grows by the operation of the same laws or forces amongst which it passes its existence: hence the general harmony; the consciousness of the individual man is developed by the society in which the man has to live. Some original tendency or power is from the first secretly at work in each of us. It works, by making us open to one class of impressions rather than to another; but, soldier or priest, or rudest workman, each one grows up in an external world which forms him to itself. One is glad to think that even classes of men one cannot much admire, enjoy the results of this harmony between themselves and the atmosphere they have to breathe. That tricky huckster whom I now catch a glimpse

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of, on the road below us, driving his miserable beast, driving everywhere his dirty bargains (as Gravenhurst knows to its cost), is not an agreeable creature to contemplate. But he has his own triumphs, and rejoices in his own acquisitions. I cannot grudge them to him, though they are not the triumphs or acquisitions that the man of science, for instance, will sympathise with.

But this moulding of the individual by the society is, fortunately, not complete. After a time, this character, which is so much the formation of circumstances, stands firm, and we say the man overrules the circumstance. Besides which, there are some few men whose inherent powers, cultivated by the contemporaneous society, carry them, in this or that direction, higher, farther than the contemporary society that surrounds them. Their ebullient and creative natures give us the great leader, the great reformer, the man of genius. These natures return the debt they owe to society, by helping in the further formation of society.

I know not how it is with other men, but

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the greater number of truths I attempt to grasp that relate to human nature, the more am I impressed with the harmony pervading this great arena of human life. One man finds that character is too fluent, another that it is too rigid. Its liability to change, and its persistency in the form it has taken, are both facts, and most harmonious facts. One man sees the influence of society moulding always the individual, another notices that it is the individual, in fact, that shapes the society. Both are truths, and in most admirable harmony. The influence of the society on the individual is the great governing, educating, conservative element: the influence of the still advancing individual upon society is the great progressive element, raising the standard of knowledge, of virtue, of piety.

ADA.

You are certainly a confirmed optimist, Mr. Sandford, though I know you repudiate that title. How is it that society breeds so many characters that are prejudicial to it? No harmony there!

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SANDFORD.

You see I am not an optimist, for I at once acknowledge that we have many bad men to combat. Robbers and thieves of all kinds must, at least, be kept under, if the race cannot be exterminated—exterminated, I mean, by the widening circle of prosperity and intelligence. But I have no imaginary project by which I could have relieved society from this duty. Property must have its temptations to the poor and the ignorant, and these temptations the law must neutralise by the penalties it imposes upon theft.

ADA.

When I have heard you dilate on the completeness *of the whole,* and how each living thing takes some part in this complete whole, I have asked myself whether a thief, or even a greater criminal, might not justify himself as being a part of a complete whole, which would not be complete without him also. He might quote Pope's famous line,

"All partial evil universal good."

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SANDFORD.

Whatever part he has to perform, there can be no doubt of our part towards him. He may bring it to this pass, that the use of his existence is just to be hanged for an example!

MANSFIELD.

Pope's line, "Partial evil universal good," can be only true in this sense, that the evil arises out of general laws, themselves wise and beneficent. The evil, as it exists then and there, is simply detestable, and to be destroyed. The only good that can be said of it is, that it may call forth our ingenuity and effort in its destruction. If there are wicked men who will not let others live in peace and security, they are manifestly the most virulent evils in the world; and if we cannot amend them—or till some happy process of amendment is discovered—we must destroy them, or shut them up like wild beasts.

ADA.

What a cold-blooded view of punishment it

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is that regards it simply as an act of self-defence in society. It seems to take no note of the feeling of justice, of desert. If I were not animated by the feeling that he deserves his punishment, I could never consent to take away the life of a criminal. My heart would fail me.

SANDFORD.

And I am sure that if time were given you for reflection, and you had to take life away simply on that feeling of desert, your heart would fail you. Nothing would nerve your hand—let us say, to sign the death-warrant—except the recognition that such an act was necessary to the preservation of society.

ADA.

In this consideration, great as it is, I do not find a basis for my *sense of justice.*

MANSFIELD.

That sense of justice you desire to be animated by, is a very complex sentiment. We will not attempt its analysis just now. You

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have sat long enough upon this rank grass. We have been discussing, in our desultory manner, the subject of human happiness ; this of human crime and its punishment we must postpone to another sitting.

ADA.

Willingly. It is a gloomy subject, that both attracts and repels at the same moment. Much rather would I, in presence of this beautiful nature, think of the varieties there are of human happiness—ay, and of human virtues.

After all, crime is but an exception. How few of us feel the least temptation to commit a heinous crime! We revolt at the thought of it. Pry under the thatch of every cottage in Gravehurst: peaceful possession, secure lives, the punctually rewarded industry—these are what every inhabitant prizes. Morality is, in the main, the chosen mode of life—the chosen mode of reasonable men. Otherwise, I suppose, it would not have been morality, nor would have been hedged about by the penalties of law.

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MANSFIELD.

Very good, Ada. I too, if I had any gift of eloquence—if I could speak or write a word that would stir the heart, or bring conviction to a dozen men in England—would take for my theme this marvellous creation of *human life;* I would speak my word to excite a love and admiration for this great gift of life. I would show men what countless treasures were included in this great gift—treasures, be it understood, that are generally to be *earned*—earned by energy, protected by fortitude. I have very little to offer to sloth or pusillanimity.

Progress! and "a good day coming!" Well, you shall believe devoutly in progress—it is a generous and noble faith, but it means nothing except in the generous and the noble. Progress!—oh, by all means!—but if you find nothing in the world as it *is*, worthy of your love and admiration, you may live a thousand years, and gain no comfort out of "progress of the species." If this commonplace of life, with its kindly affections and its stirring intellect, its

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gay surprises, its tender sorrows,—if this has not won your reverence, I know not what possible Utopia can be worth a straw. This commonplace of life will last, I suspect, as long—as long as these other commonplaces of earth, and sun, and stars. If, I say, you find nothing divine in the love of woman and of child, in friendship, in steadfast purposes tending to the general good—out of what elements do you expect your progress?

Mark this pleasant contrast—old as civilisation itself—between the city and the plain, between the town and the country. Each is necessary to the other. The city that feeds upon the plain diffuses over it the influence of arts, science, mental culture. Note the harmonious varieties of human character that spring up from variety of scene and occupation. If you set about contriving an ideal state or a perfect society, you must leave untouched this relation, this contrast. You must have the city for arts and learning, the seat of government and of universities; and out beyond, the cultivated fields, with farms and villages, and occa-

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sionally the park and the palace. May the future Gravenhursts contain many a trio as rationally happy as we three who are sitting here!

SANDFORD.

No very bad wish; though we will not make it known as part of our programme for the future.

ADA.

How great become the most trivial cares of existence—such as food and clothing—when we think for all!—when some great principle of patriotism or duty shines over them. The simplest pleasure—when I am concerned that *another* shall enjoy it—how exalted it has become!

> "The small, familiar, transitory joy,
> Seen in the light of an eternal truth—
> The mote—the beam!"

What transmutations take place in this wondrous life of ours! The inexorable need of the hunger-driven animal—lo! it is a component part of the sweetest of our Christian charities.

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Sometimes, when I look back on barbarian or savage existence, I shudder to think what life must have been *before* these transmutations or new combinations arose—due, I presume, to the slow growth of knowledge, or the reason of man. The savage is a very hideous spectacle.

MANSFIELD.

To you. But *he*—as complete in himself as you or I—leads his own life contentedly. Nay, if contentment with himself were the sole test of happiness—which it is not—it is only one amongst many tests—we should hold the savage happier than ourselves. He is the most conceited of his species. It is, indeed, a universal kindness of Nature that she compensates ignorance by a most triumphant conceit.

In the history of religion, which reveals so much to us of the history of the whole human mind, it is curious to notice that in those early times, and in those alone, when men had least to boast of, the idea more than once appears that the gods were jealous of mankind! Prometheus steals fire from heaven, and Jupiter is

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angry and envious, lest men should too nearly resemble the gods!

SANDFORD.

A low conception of the gods, more than their own conceit, must have occasioned such an idea.

I don't know whether we should rank our heathen ancestors—Scandinavians and others—amongst savages, but their mode of life is one which our literary men have of late taken under their especial patronage. Miserable tribes, that are struggling with nature for subsistence on some inhospitable soil, excite our compassion, but tribes that have spirit and energy enough for war, have escaped from our pity.

ADA.

Perhaps, if one thinks of it a second time, the terrible despotism, the wars of conquest, the dissensions and revolutions of what we call civilised states, present a still more frightful spectacle. My only consolation is to think that in the worst of times there have been mil-

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lions living in their own homes, undisturbed by the political tempest raging around them.

And so we shelter ourselves again in this sweet commonplace of life, which quietly gathers to itself many a new grace and joy, even out of the very stir, and tumult, and energy of mind which wars and revolutions have produced.

MANSFIELD.

The great barbaric empires of ancient days, Egyptian or Babylonian—half-civilised nations, as we call them—seem almost as foreign to us as the wild nomadic tribes they reduced to subjection. We sympathise as little with their kings and priests, as with the great mass of the people whom these together disciplined into manners, and methodical industry. This mass of people look like great children to us. Well, they enjoy like children. The monarch who tyrannises over them is also their greatest pride. They glory in their prostration. Is he not *their* monarch? A priesthood entertains them with ceremonial, and brings into their hearts the noble sentiment of worship. Am I

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to distress myself at superstitions which make these children obedient and industrious? And when at length these superstitions break down, as they will, before some inquiring mind, am I to alarm myself about the preservation of that degree of virtue they secured? Other superstitions will arise and perform their office. It is never vice that calls forth the new and conquering faith.

But I did not intend to be carried into any review of the past, when I started with the wish that I could help men to form a full and rational, and therefore high, estimate of their own lives. I was thinking what humanity is amongst our advanced and cultivated nations; what we ourselves feel it to be, we living here in this quiet nook, where, nevertheless, the highest thinking of every capital in Europe reaches us.—But now we must homeward. My dear Ada, call your pony. See that lumbering lad, whose aspect first prompted this conversation, has taken mightily to your four-footed friend. Speak to him; bid him bring the pony. Notwithstanding his loutish appearance,

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I feel persuaded that a word from you—a service kindly asked of him (one smile from the lady) will give him more pleasure by far than, for instance, the coin I shall slip into his hand.

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CONVERSATION II.

CRIME AND ITS PUNISHMENT — THE RATIONALE OF PUNISHMENT.

MANSFIELD—ADA—SANDFORD.

THE evening of the same day on which the last conversation was held, we were again deep in discussion. On returning from our ride I had been pressed to dine with the General, instead of proceeding to my own bachelor quarters. Ada made tea for us. In the course of the evening she reverted to that topic which in the morning she had willingly, she said, relinquished, but which evidently exercised a strong fascination over her. How reconcile with the belief in a beneficent Creator the existence and the punishment of sin? This was her perplexity. I jot down our talk as

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faithfully as I can; but as it wandered through some subtle trains of thought, I am compelled to condense and to abridge a little.

ADA.

I hope it is not from any obtuseness of feeling that when I hear or read of any great terrestrial calamity, as earthquakes or the plague, it is not then that I am peculiarly perplexed to justify the ways of Providence to men. An earthquake of Lisbon, or a plague of Florence, destroys thousands of men; but, after all, it is only another form of death, and thousands of men are dying every day all over the world.

SANDFORD.

It is the disorganisation of society that constitutes the terrible evil on these occasions. Death, in its ordinary operations, takes here and there—this old man, that young man—in such uncertain and slow manner, that throughout no part of society is *the confident expectation of living* much disturbed. There comes a plague or a famine, and no man has a future

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for which to live. Society collapses. There is nothing but terror, or apathy, or wildest levity.

ADA.

Whatever the nature of such evils, I suppose they must be finally traced to the operation of laws, chemical or physiological, on which our whole mundane system depends. Let us yield our lives to the plague or the inundation. It comes but to this—a few years *not* enjoyed. Let us yield our lives cheerfully, since they could not have been wisely preserved to us.

But what if there be an evil which casts its shadow — a blackness worse than death — through all eternity?

Men have weak and depraved wills—they commit crime, they are justly punished—but the terrible perplexity occurs, Why did the righteous Creator of mankind create beings of weak and depraved wills? Or why, if He created them perfect, and they degraded themselves (which is inconceivable, if they were indeed perfect at the first)—why is the depraved race allowed to perpetuate itself? How am

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I to reconcile God the Judge, with God the Creator? I am scared at my own voice when I ask the question. Perhaps it ought to be repressed. Enough, that there is a wisdom I cannot understand. And what is faith, if it be not reliance upon a wisdom I cannot apprehend?

SANDFORD

Sooner or later we must all end *there*—in faith in a Supreme Reason we can only partly apprehend; but that faith is founded on such partial apprehension as we do attain.

If, therefore, we utterly disparage that partial apprehension, we destroy the foundations for that very faith which is to support us where that apprehension fails.

It is not a wholesome piety—so it seems to me—which teaches us, under the name of *mystery,* to force violently together propositions that are flagrantly inconsistent. I cannot see why your question should not be *asked.*

MANSFIELD.

You yourself, Ada, have a pet heresy of your

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own, that the punishments of a future life are not eternal. If not eternal, why should it be impossible to reconcile them with some grand scheme for the final recovery, restoration, or perfection of all created beings?

If I am called upon to believe that the wickedness of the world terminates in the eternal misery of the wicked, and that the goodness or piety of the world is to terminate in the eternal felicity of the good; and if, moreover, I am assured that the number of the wicked fully equals the number of the good: then it irresistibly follows that God has created equally for misery and for happiness. I see no escape from this conclusion, unless you have some other knowledge yet to reveal to me. There is here no ultimate predominance of good over evil; there are, so to speak, two separate lines, the one of good, ending in eternal brightness; the other of evil, ending in eternal darkness: it is *not* a scheme of supreme benevolence that the creation presents to me. Under these circumstances you have no right to ask me to reconcile future punishments with

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the belief in a benevolent Creator, because you have destroyed my belief in a benevolent Creator. I can only retain this belief on the ground that future punishments have some great beneficent purpose, some unknown ground of expediency.

ADA.

It might be difficult to find grounds of expediency for punishments short of eternal. But my difficulty does not lie there. The divine punishments of another world are not *motived*, so to speak, by expediency, or by expediency alone. Divine justice justifies itself. The *just* is as fundamental an idea as the *happy*. God creates for both. Our sin is visited because it *is* sin. Under this view of the divine character it is difficult to conceive why sin was created or permitted.

SANDFORD.

Might not your difficulty be solved by a re-examination of your theory of punishment, or of divine justice? It is connected, I know, with a theory of ethics which happens to be

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in the ascendant at present. A mysterious *right* and *wrong*—something else than the dictate of human reason judging of truth and happiness—is the favourite theory, I believe, of our universities. Nevertheless, think of it—a wrong action (or a wrong purpose), which is wrong because it *is* wrong, is visited with a punishment that is just because it *is* just! According to such a statement, neither the sin nor the punishment admits of any explanation by its relation to that whole of human existence, of which, nevertheless, it forms a part. Such ideas appear to me to introduce hopeless confusion: they are obscurities, occasioned by starting with some complex notion which we refuse or neglect to analyse.

ADA.

I will listen to your analysis. But I have read some analytic explanations of our sentiment of justice, and they have not seemed to me satisfactory.

MANSFIELD.

My Ada, if we would speak intelligibly of

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divine justice, must we not first understand what we mean by human justice? Can we have two ideas of justice? or two theories of punishment?

ADA.

I suppose not. Human justice is some imperfect striving after the divine justice. Or (if that is the more correct statement), divine justice is the amplification and perfection of the human.

When we punish a criminal here on earth, we do not punish only from expediency. We say the man *deserves* his punishment; and without this sentiment of desert we should not feel ourselves authorised to punish.

MANSFIELD.

True, we do not punish solely from expediency. We punish, in the first place, from our passion of anger, which prompts us to return injury for injury; and from our feeling of sympathy, which prompts us to resent the injury done to our friends and companions.

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We punish, in the second place, from expediency; that is, from a steadfast purpose to prevent a certain class of injuries in future. But this is not all. Laws being once made, we judge of a man's conduct by its obedience and disobedience to those laws. A new element is thus introduced, the result of the law itself. This sentiment of *deserving* punishment as a breach of the laws, is a consequence of laws themselves. Now, you would start from the sentiment of *desert*, as if you found in *it* your primary authority for the law itself.

ADA.

If I set about making a new law, imposing a new penalty, I am at least partly guided by this sentiment, that the man deserves a certain amount of punishment. This sentiment of desert, which you say is created by the law, is the sentiment by which I legislate, or partly make the law.

MANSFIELD.

In making a new law, and devising a new

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penalty, you would be partly led by analogy to the laws already made. The nature of the penalty you would impose would be decided by the current legislation of the period. In these days you would probably say that any act that was tantamount to murder deserved death. In a remote period, murder itself was punished by a pecuniary fine, and the sentiment of *desert* must have been somewhat different.

You say that the sentiment of desert partly frames the law. No doubt of this. But it does not follow that it was not, therefore, in the first instance, the product of a law.

When we make for ourselves a puzzle of this description, there is always some step in the process of development we have overlooked. There could be no flute-player, unless there was already such a thing as a flute in existence. There could be no flute made, unless there was already a flute-player in existence. The puzzle seems hopeless. But, in fact, nature threw the man a reed, and he became flute-player, and afterwards flute-maker, and his

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flute-playing and his flute-making advanced henceforth together. No penal law is enacted without some sentiment of desert, and no sentiment of desert could have existed without a penal law of some kind, more or less distinctly enunciated. The puzzle here also seems hopeless. But nature threw the man his passions, sympathies, habits, customs; and out of these, with some rude reasonings on the good of the community, he made laws. Henceforward he becomes a *law-observer*—has sense of obligation to a rule or law—sense of deserving punishment if he breaks the laws; and this sentiment of obligation or desert afterwards sustains the laws, and enters into the manufacture of other analogous laws.

ADA.

Your explanation, if I may pass a compliment upon it, is very clear and distinct, and yet it is not satisfactory. I find the same puzzle in the broad field of morality. It is said that my sentiment of *obligation* comes from the opinion of society (or the opinion, in the first

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place, of controlling parents). Well, but the opinion of society is the opinion of a number of individuals; if these individuals had not themselves the sentiment of moral obligation, how could they import it into the general opinion? Coleridge somewhere states this argument for an intuitive or *a priori* morality very powerfully: I wish I had his words here to refer to.

MANSFIELD.

I am quite willing, Ada, that you should take our puzzle into the broad field of ethics.

However intimately they are blended together, we are capable of separating the judgment of what is wise in human conduct, from a personal feeling or motive for acting according to that judgment. The mere feeling of responsibility, or obligation, is (as every one reflecting upon his own experience must recognise) the result of some command, some threat. It is essentially a sentiment of fear. Mind, I do not say that the complex sentiment we generally speak of as moral ob-

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ligation, is to be resolved entirely into fear, because with this feeling we have combined our love of goodness, and our detestation of what disturbs the peace and happiness of mankind. It is a moral being of the very lowest order who is influenced only by fear of punishment. But without this fear of some kind of penalty, though a man might be very wise, and act very wisely, he could not have the special feeling of obligation. Such is the intricate harmony that our human life displays! The highest and the lowest are seen blended together. Fear is that element by the addition of which the last dictate of the reason becomes *conscience*, as well as *reason*.

Now you will have no difficulty in admitting that moral obligation, so far as it is a sentiment of fear, proceeds from the power of others over us. It is a sentiment which is imposed upon us by society—by numbers—and which we, in our turn, help to impose upon others. You are in a very small minority when you want to break the rule—in a very large majority when you insist upon the rule.

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ADA.

It seems to me to degrade the sentiment of moral obligation (even regarding it only as the coercive element in a moral judgment), to attribute it to fear of man, or to the control of public opinion.

MANSFIELD.

There is nothing degrading in living under the control of public opinion, so long as our reason approves of that public opinion.

A cultivated man both lives under the influence of public opinion, and also helps to shape and improve it, by his own individual judgment of what is wise or good for all. It is this last judgment, and the habit of acting on it (till it grows a necessity in the man that he acts his highest reason), which form the loftiest moral character.

But the most cultivated man is not above the aid and support of public opinion, and the least cultivated man is not without some feeling of independence accruing from the exercise of his own judgment.

I am afraid I have interrupted Mr Sandford,

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who would have given you a more scholastic explanation than I have done of these ethical perplexities. But I have said enough, I think, to clear the way to an understanding of the nature of our criminal justice. Our punishments can assume no higher character than that of penalties designedly imposed for the support of a rule of conduct approved by the generality. Vindictive passions, and sentiments which have grown up under the existence of laws, mingle themselves with our jurisprudence; but our punishments, I repeat, can assume no higher character than that of means to procure obedience to some desirable rule.

ADA.

Perhaps I should find no insuperable difficulty in accepting your explanation, if I had nothing to consider but human justice, or human punishments. I could understand how, in the first instance, our vindictive and social passions, our habits, customs, and need of mutual protection, might lead to laws, and how under those laws a spirit of obedience, and a

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sentiment of merit and demerit might be cultivated.

But how will all this apply to the divine punishments of another world? We necessarily animate God with a sentiment of justice, yet *our* sentiment of justice is partly composed of vindictive feeling, or sympathy with vindictive feeling; and it is in part the creature of the law itself—which those vindictive feelings and perhaps a temporary expediency, together dictated. This is not applicable to theology. In theology we want a sentiment of justice at once associating crime and punishment.

MANSFIELD.

I do not recognise such want. God is, with us, that Supreme Reason which creates or ordains *the whole*—creates for the good of the whole; or say, especially for the happiness, for the intellectual, moral, and religious elevation of the human being, the crown and climax of creation. His punishments, whatever they may be, must have their place in the great scheme: they are means to an end; they are

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not ends in themselves. They are justified by their wisdom; they advance, we may be sure, in some way, the culture, the goodness, the happiness of some great community of created beings.

The wisdom or expediency of the divine punishments is surely sufficient ground for them. Nor is it possible to invent, for the purposes of theology, a new and especial sentiment of justice. We have no sentiment which, apart from consideration of expediency, demands with unalterable voice the punishment of crime; we know of no *eternal fitness* which connects punishment and sin, overriding the motives of expediency.

When the criminal stands before us convicted and repentant, we as often have the desire to pardon as to punish. Why is it that we do not allow our compassion to dictate to us? Why do we still inflict the punishment that the law had threatened? Because we know that, if we spared the criminal, this *threat* of punishment would lose its efficacy for the future. It is not from the feeling of any eternal fitness between

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punishment and crime. Society needs this threat, and its efficacy must be preserved.

The divine punishments are motived by the divine wisdom acting for the good of some great whole. Is not this enough for us to say? and all we can say?

ADA.

But if I am driven from this hold of an eternal sentiment of justice decreeing punishment—if I must have recourse to expediency to explain all—shall I confess it?—I am perplexed by the difficulty of discovering an intelligible ground of expediency, I will not say for eternal punishments, but for any intense prolonged inflictions imposed in another world. Pain does not reform; or, if it does, new hopes and wider knowledge reform more effectually. No one believes that such inflictions are threatened, and the threat carried into execution, *solely* to assist our own imperfect tribunals of justice—solely to assist the cultivation of our terrestrial virtue. If such punishments are intense, they produce more misery than they prevent: if their inten-

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sity is mitigated, the threat of them, as they are remote and unseen, loses all efficacy whatever. Those who have undertaken to ground our future punishments upon expediency, boldly call in other races of intellectual beings to profit by our terrible example. "What the punishment," they have said, "of one individual is to the community, such may be the punishment of one sinful world to the whole universe of habitable globes." This may be an adequate ground of expediency, but the hypothesis proceeds on a very melancholy estimate of the moral and intellectual culture of the whole universe :—everywhere intellectual beings held to their own best happiness by the threat of an extraneous punishment.

MANSFIELD.

It is a mere imagination at the best. And these other globes—they are peopled by beings who either resemble us or not. If they do not resemble us, and have not the same weaknesses and temptations, they cannot profit by the report of our misdeeds and their punishment.

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If they do resemble us, and have our weaknesses and temptations,—why, the threat held out of remote and distant punishment will be as ineffectual, or as partial, with them as it has been with us. The condemned planets would become very numerous.

But although we do not gain much by calling in the inhabitants of other globes, yet it is quite open to any reasoner to assert that there may be grounds of expediency unknown to us. And if, my Ada, we must end at last in something we do not comprehend, is it not better to rest these future punishments on some grounds of expediency not yet revealed to us, than to rest them on some sentiment of justice altogether inexplicable? Punishment is a means to an end. No other and no higher view can we take of it. But what end it may answer, may be altogether beyond our knowledge.

The only possible conception we can form of the *morality* of God is, that He concerns Himself for the good of the whole, and the goodness of His creatures. Now, as the whole universe, and

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all God's purposes, cannot be known to me, I may readily confess myself incompetent to judge of the expediency of what is to be transacted in another world. But I must believe there *is* an expediency, and that God acts throughout for some great beneficent purpose.

And this view solves the difficulty you started. If we may consider the justice of God as still having for its end the advancement of the creatures He has formed, there is nothing irreconcilable between the character of God the Judge and God the Creator. The punishments of God are, here and hereafter, check, guidance, instruction.*

* Some of the ethical difficulties that obscure this important topic are touched upon again in Conversation V.

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CONVERSATION III.

THE RAINBOW; OR, SUFFERING AN ELEMENT IN OUR HIGHEST FORMS OF MENTAL LIFE.

ADA—SANDFORD.

THE rainbow—which the poets tell us is a product of smiles and tears—certainly of sunshine and shower—may be taken as a type for a large and beautiful range of human thought and feeling, in the composition of which some form of evil, sadness, or strife, has necessarily entered. What is most tender, what is most heroic in life, is of this description. The greater portion of those sentiments with which poetry loves to deal is of this description. Music, the fine arts, and, above all, religion, partake largely of this rainbow nature, are products of that joy

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and grief which for ever intermingle in "the atmosphere of human thought."

No pensive contemplation, no poetry, no philosophy, could exist if sorrow and the shadow of death were not thrown over the world. Everywhere joy and tears, the light and the storm, make the rainbow of our thought-life. There is often a subtle happiness where you would least expect to find it; some faint gleam of purest light steals, for instance, amongst our regrets for a lost friend. The blending of happy memories with our grief converts it, for a moment, into something that almost looks like happiness. Our dead joys are revived for us, even while we think of them as dead. Nay, even great calamities bring with them often a sense of novelty, and an intense expectation, which break the suffering and divide our attention.

Some of our most poetical, most cherished, and pensive states of mind can only express themselves in the language of sadness. We may judge from this whether the melancholy of the poet, or the eloquent writer, is any valid

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testimony against the general felicity of mankind.

Even the sharp calamities of life that at their actual first endurance were an unmitigated wretchedness, become transmuted in the memory, or rather undergo fresh combinations, and so change their character. The thoughts or reflections of a man (remorse being excepted, and the agony of indecision) are never, I believe, wholly painful.

I was thus occupied with my *rainbow* when I encountered Ada on our village bridge, a favourite spot of hers and of mine. It is so near to her own house that she can manage to walk to it; and she can stand here without fatigue, for there is a narrow ledge running along inside the stone parapet on which she can rest the weaker foot. She says, smiling at her own infirmity, that she is like those birds who cannot make much either of walking or flying, but who have a marvellous faculty for standing on one leg. She will stand thus, if there happens to be no one else loitering upon the bridge, for half an hour together, gazing on the stream

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that flows beneath, or looking onward and upward into the pleasant English sky, *cloud-brightened* as often as it is overclouded.

As I approached, she started from her reverie. I, who am in both senses of the word an old friend, did not scruple to ask what thought it was I had unintentionally disturbed.

ADA.

A very commonplace one. I was thinking how the life of one's daily wants, labours, and habits, flows on steadily enough—persistently as the stream running here beneath us; but how the higher thought-life is beautiful and changeful as the sky above, and the winds that traverse it. I was trying, out of very idleness, to shape the thought into a verse.

SANDFORD.

And I have disturbed the rhymes—scattered them also to the mercy of the winds.

ADA.

Not so: I had just got my rhymes complete.

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Let me say them to you, that I may keep them safe in my memory:—

I stand upon the bridge of life,
  The stream *below* holds constant course;
  It brings, it takes, with equal force;
It strives with an incessant strife.

But the other stream *above*—the air
  That plays between the skies and me
  To keep them bright—flows fitfully,—
Will bring the cloud, and leave it there.

SANDFORD.

You think, then, that in our higher thought-life we find greater change and uncertainty than in that which is represented by the current of events?

ADA.

So far as my own life is concerned, the train of events is very constant: the train of thoughts is not so. Sadness and doubt steal over me, and truth, alas! seems as often to dwell where the shadow lies as where the light is falling. "All wisdom is cheerful," is a note I often hear from our contemporary poets and philosophers. We may like to believe this. But the

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highest thinking is not always the happiest—if I, at least, may pretend to know anything of the highest.

SANDFORD.

Since the late reaction against a morbid Byronic mood (a mood that had far too much in it of mere *personal* discontent to represent the sorrow of high thoughts), it has been the fashion to describe all wise men as pre-eminently cheerful. Even the author of 'Hamlet' and 'King Lear' is reckoned amongst our smiling sages. The general testimony of mankind, and of that literature which has stood the test of time, is not in accordance with this pleasant verdict.

ADA.

How could it be? How could the merely pleasurable awake us into intense thought? Or how could intense and anxious thought rank amongst the merely pleasurable? As well hope to drive the night out of the twenty-four hours, as drive it out of the inmost recesses of our thought.

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SANDFORD.

One might say that it is this infinite night, which seems to surround our little globe, that throws an undying interest on its petty transactions and transitory passions.

ADA.

Speaking of my own experience, thought has been less happy as my horizon of thought has extended. I suffered from many a nightmare when I was a child, but I have suffered more in later times when the dream was fading away—not always into the light of the morning.

SANDFORD.

Yet I am sure you would not contract your horizon. We want some word to express that happiness which is not pleasure.

ADA.

Music expresses it to me ; I know no other language that does. No! I would not relinquish on any account what little has been granted me of intellectual vision. Come blind-

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ness of the eye rather! I do not envy the placidity of men and women of manifestly contracted understandings. I might as well envy (as I have heard some foolish people *say* they did) the still more placid lives of our domestic animals. I delight to contemplate—I have no wish to imitate—the life of any sort of *tabby*. My cat enjoys her existence in common with me *up to a certain point*. When in the winter evening I draw the easy-chair towards the fire, she couches before me on the rug. We both enjoy the light, the warmth, the softness, the repose, and for a moment I distinctly congratulate myself on this perfect cat-like felicity. But this pleasant state of things must be, with me, the condition only for some higher enjoyment. I must converse with a friend, I must read books, I must think my thoughts, I must lose myself in their labyrinth. Puss, on the rug, stops where I begin—feels all the peace, the comfort, and the warmth, and stops there perfectly content. I see her close her eyes and open them again, quite satisfied that everything about her is as

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stationary as herself. Well, I will not envy puss. I will take, by sympathy, her little contented life into my own, and so enrich my being with one more kindly sentiment. This is all that I will do, whether the puss lies at my feet, in her own fur, upon the rug, or whether she sits, in mob-cap or pretty ringlets, upon the chair before me.

SANDFORD.

The relations between you and the tabby could not be better adjusted.

People who constantly repeat the same things lose the point and significance of even those few ideas which make up their monotonous chant. Change and mutability are the necessary accompaniments of intellectual action. And how this changeful activity could have been accorded to us, and we preserved from all sadness and uncertainty, is past my ingenuity to conceive. Again, we often regret, or needlessly satirise in ourselves or others, a certain inconstancy in our opinions. Without some measure of this inconstancy we should

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have no opinions at all that were worthy of the name.

ADA.

I suppose that all activity, of mind as well as body, implies change of some kind. Of a moon in a cloudless sky, beautiful as she is, how soon one tires! Let the winds blow the great clouds about her, now blotting her from view, and now surrounding her with those enormous masses brighter than herself, and I can look for ever.

How much of motion and of turbulence—turbulence of heart—enters into the composition of what we call the love of nature! When I stand spellbound by the sea-shore, and thoughts are beating within me, ceaseless as the waves upon the rocks—is it joy, or remembrance, or hope of joy, that makes the charm that enthrals me? Very little, it seems to me, of joy. The grand untiring energy of nature, typified so gloriously in the ocean, meets in me with a melancholy, and yet not inharmonious response. Whether the wind blows the spray forward, like a wild

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horse's mane—or whether the long low wave comes muffled to the shore in its own foam—I have always a response for the ocean; but how rarely is that response a self-congratulation!

And as the sea bounds, wave after wave, to the level shore, the seabird, upward and downward, with most harmonious contrast, describes its waving line above it in the air. Ah, that seabird flying there — half wing, half wind—(so are we all, all that make any flight—we feel that our force is half Nature's, half our own)—how often have I, poor creeping wanderer! watched its free, bold, and never-drooping wing!—and my heart has gone forth towards it for something in its life that was *not* mine.

There is always some grief in our communion with nature. I stand beneath the solemn yew-tree—tree devoted to death and to the past; I hang my own sorrow on its boughs, and lose and receive it back in a thousand thrilling emotions due to our common mortality.

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SANDFORD.

You touch a train of thought which my own mind was playing with when I met you: what is more, you give me in yourself an example of that rainbow life which is born of joy and of suffering.

ADA.

You and my uncle together have so indoctrinated me with the idea that our life is a varied energy—of action or of thought—that I find myself looking with a singular toleration on those pains and vicissitudes which seem necessary to sustain this energy. From the movements of an insect to the cogitations of a philosopher, one sees everywhere that some form of fear and danger and distress is playing an essential part. I can watch complacently yonder butterfly, that ought—according to our ideal of a butterfly—ought to flutter undisturbed from flower to flower. It leads no such undisturbed life; not flowers alone prompt and direct its flight. All manner of dangers beset its pleasant and fragile existence: boys throw

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their caps at it; birds swoop upon the wing; it flutters dizzily on, saved again and again by the very waywardness of its flight. Our celestial Father has cared for this little creature also. It has endured through countless generations; it has fluttered down to us from paradise; for, I suppose, it could boast a pedigree as ancient as that child of Adam who is now chasing it cap in hand.

The ideal that would unite peace and energy, or unite them for any length of time together, belongs to another world and an altered being —not to terrestrial man.

SANDFORD.

He who is zealously engaged in the search for truth, whether we call him philosopher or man of science, approaches nearest to this ideal.

ADA.

I, not being a philosopher or man of science, have not found the search for truth accompanied with much peace of mind. My little share

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of such noble toil is still, however, that which I prize highest in my existence.

I imagine that, in a future life, this present terrestrial being will be looked upon as we look back upon a troubled dream of which we remember little *but* the trouble. Some recollection of it must, I suppose, remain, otherwise how recognise our personal identity, or the continuity of our existence? But I recoil from the idea that we shall be always turning over the pages of our memory, and reading the frivolous, blundering, incoherent entries in it. Strange brain-book! a blotted register, whose leaves turn by some magic of their own, and open too often at the place of least pleasant reading. Most mysterious brain-book! And we see that here in this life it becomes defaced, and torn, and stained, and scribbled over, till nothing further can be registered, and the leaves turn slowly, and open only at a few of the earliest pages. Well, would you have this brain-book restored—as some expect and ask for—every word of it made legible, every page of it opening, in its turn, throughout eternity? Oh,

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better far some new brain-book, to be filled with a nobler story! Who would wish to be reading eternally in this old one?

SANDFORD.

Immortality is a great hope, but a dim conception. We only risk our hope when we attempt to render its nature distinct. Our ideal acts beneficently upon the actual and present existence, because it is *not* another complete life that we, in fact, depict to ourselves, but only some isolated sentiment of this life, that we glorify, and project, and follow, we know not how, into eternity.

ADA.

We are but specks of light moving through infinite space; we move towards an impenetrable darkness, we leave behind an impenetrable darkness. It is light but just where we are.

Is it not strange that I always imagine myself *alone* in my heaven? Yet it would be a terrible fate to pass eternity in solitude,

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or in the felt presence *only* of the Eternal. Is this because, as you seem to suggest, we can do something towards imagining an immortal soul, but very little in shaping for ourselves the life and society of immortal creatures?

Look at that beam of light which strikes suddenly down from heaven to the earth! How glorious it is! A very beam from heaven! Now it is gone. A little opening in the cloud —a subtle mist in the air—that was our *beam!* our own mist made visible; still, let us say, touched and irradiated by light from heaven.

That beam suggests an illustration for what seems to me a not quite unphilosophical statement, though, like the mist, it is somewhat hazy. I will hazard it. You shall criticise and contradict when we next meet. Religion is a truth which for us reveals itself in some form of the imagination. Our reason criticises the form, and helps to mould it to the changeful requisitions of society and of science. But still to the end of time we have only Heaven's light on some subtle mist of the imagination. You shall show me where I am

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in error, as I suspect I am, when we meet again. At present I see that my good mother has sent a messenger for me; I must return.

SANDFORD.

The messenger brings a camp-stool in his hand. It is rather an invitation to stay out a little longer in this bright morning. Let me place it for you by the side of the river.

Accordingly, we left our position on the bridge, and walked down to the banks of the river, where we soon found a pleasant spot for the camp-stool. Being near the Welsh hills, the steep banks of our little river have a good deal of the vegetation that distinguishes a mountain stream, and especially it is rich in ferns. A glorious specimen on which the sun shone, as I arranged the seat, arrested our attention, and was the means, I think, of breaking the course of our conversation, or rather of giving it a fresh starting-point. This fern, with its magnificent fronds crowning the bank, reminded me of a previous occasion on which

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I had surprised my contemplative friend in one of her reveries. I recalled the circumstance to her. I reminded her that this was not the first time that I had interrupted the formation of one of her idle verses, as she called them.

ADA.

Indeed! What was the rhyme about? I have entirely forgotten it.

SANDFORD.

I have not. Shall I repeat the lines?

ADA.

No; I have always found that if any thought of mine had, or seemed to have, the hue of poetry upon it, I worked it into very palpable prose by the attempt to put it into verse.

SANDFORD.

Let me repeat the verses, if only to prove the tenacity of my memory. You called them,

BENEATH THE TREES.

I hear no tender madrigal,
  I muse no answer, gay or stern;
I watch the sunlight slanting fall
  Upon this coronal of fern.

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Both it and I, by winds unshaken,
An hour of peace together spend;
One silent, painless step is taken
Towards the inevitable end.

I had forgotten how melancholy a tone they assume, or I would not have repeated them.

ADA.

There is not much meaning in them of any kind, but I find nothing painful in the subject they obscurely allude to. This lameness, and the increasing ill-health to which it indirectly has led, have been perhaps compensated by a certain measure of contemplative thought that would not have been mine under other circumstances. My chief regret has been that they have limited my intercourse with nature. Only once, and long ago, have I been amongst high mountains. Oh, to be alone again once more up amongst the hills! I climb—I see the silent shadow walking, as spirits walk, along the side of the neighbouring mountain. How still it all is! O youth, somewhere solitary amongst the Alps, repine at nothing, least of all at your own solitude or isolation. What

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might, what freedom, what self-possession is yours!

SANDFORD.

The beauty of inanimate nature is some reflection of human love and human greatness; yet how often we contrast nature with man!

ADA.

We give to nature all the peace we *have*, and all the peace that we have *not*—so that she is at once our image and our contrast.

But I was going to observe that regret alone is hardly misery. I think it is only where some feeling of terror mingles with the gloom that our darker hours are really miserable.

SANDFORD.

That feeling ought not to have mingled much with your existence.

ADA.

Life is sometimes very terrible. Perhaps I should say that death, not life, has been made a terror to us. Over our hours of solitary

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and speculative thought there broods a fear and a sense of responsibility which were unknown to the freer heathen: how much else was also unknown to him, it is not requisite to add.

SANDFORD.

Whether an altogether calmer and less emotional faith might not accord better with the cultivated mind, I will not undertake to say; but this is plain, that the peculiar and intense emotions of love and gratitude which distinguish our own religion, could not exist without the opposite phase of an unspeakable fear.

No better illustration could be given of the *rainbow* character of our mental joys than we should find in that halo of glory which surrounds a Christian's brow. There is an agony in our religion which I, for one, will not underrate; but it is an essential element in a faith that, I need not say, has fed the world with loftier and more tender emotions, and led to purer and more loving lives, than mankind had ever known before.

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ADA.

Strange subject, this of religion, where every error you can mention has its beneficial result. Every superstition has some beautiful offspring —holds up its smiling infant to your face— and you cannot strike.

I cannot strike. What doubt I have but makes me more complete a slave.

My late father was especially fond of religious books, and, amongst religious books, of the biographies of pious men. He delighted to read of their conversions and their deaths. The house was abundantly supplied with works of this description, and when a girl I read many of them. I will confess to you that the description of the mental agonies attendant upon the conversion of some of these pious men, left a stronger impression upon my mind than their subsequent joy and exultation. Their danger was mine; their exultant rapture I did not reach. Not every one has the temperament of hope, or the confidence that can appropriate the promises of what Milton calls an "enormous bliss."

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Men of blunt, untutored susceptibilities, who cannot, if they would, fix their attention for any length of time on what is remote and unseen, may believe in any burning Tartarus they please; they seem to derive from it nothing worse than a passing and very tolerable excitement. Their torpid faculties are warmed into action by this subterranean heat. If they stand upon the brink, as they tell you, of an awful precipice, they do not think that theirs will be the foot to slip. I do not call upon you to waste compassion on our loud-throated pietists, who moan very audibly over agonies they fully expect to escape. There is also another and very different class of men, who will not need our pity. Polemic divines are too busy in shaping their orthodox systems to feel much of the terror of them. Their learning is an armour of defence as well as a weapon of attack. Even impassioned, eloquent men, if strenuously occupied with their oratorical labours, throw off on others, in their very eloquence, the fire that might have consumed themselves. Chemists show us that in the

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very centre of a flame that scorches everything about it there is a cool and tranquil spot. The head of a college, zealous for the integrity of his doctrinal scheme; the popular preacher, whose very occupation is to diffuse the terror he holds as salutary, are personally safe. They, for the most part, will be very genuine, very busy, very laborious, and very calm believers.

It is a different matter when a terrible belief falls upon a sensitive self-scrutinising mind, whose energies are not carried off in labours for the conversion, or the government, of other men. Such a one puts before himself an ideal of moral and religious perfection — unattainable, it is confessed, by mere mortal man, yet obligatory on him. In vain he makes some advance towards his ideal; the susceptibility of his pious conscience increases with his progress in piety. At each hastened step his terror gains upon him—he sees the impossibility of attaining his ideal even more clearly as he makes efforts to approach it. That ideal rises as he rises; the higher the ground he stands on,

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the more lofty and inaccessible the mountain-top above him.

He does not venture to say to himself that a standard unattainable by man cannot be the standard by which man is to be judged. God judges, he has been told, according to His own perfect holiness. Infinite goodness can admit no compromise with evil. Strange logic! that measures the guilt of the creature, not by the powers of the creature, but by the perfection and purity of the Creator.

SANDFORD.

But do you not forget that the standard required is rather one of faith than of holiness? The self-condemned has but to throw himself on the grace of God, and the perfection he desires will be wrought within him by higher power than his own.

ADA.

I know. But this very sentiment of faith is part of the Christian's ideal, and not the part

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which all men find most easy to attain. Read the memoirs of the pious. Some, by an act of faith of this description, fling themselves at once from extreme despair to extreme exultation. Others tremble and linger long, or sway to and fro with dreadful oscillations, before such happy transition is effected. The history of those who have utterly failed no one has recorded. "Only leap with faith," says the bold explorer of these spiritual heights to the more timid mountaineer; "only believe that an invisible hand will sustain you—only throw yourself upon this invisible power, and, fearful as the chasm or the gulf may be, you will find yourself landed on the other side of it." Alas! he stands on the edge of the chasm, and cannot throw himself upon invisible hands; he lacks the courage of this faith. If, in addition to all this, he begins to doubt whether his bold adviser has correctly interpreted the sacred message he undertakes to deliver, his misery is complete.—But why need we pursue this melancholy theme?

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SANDFORD.

I apprehend the numbers are few in whom our religious teaching produces this painful result.

ADA.

No very intense affliction can last long, or last long without many pauses and intervals of respite. But I believe there are many whose early education has left a terror that, to the end of their days, revisits them from time to time, and which constantly throws over their best and highest speculations a sense of danger and of guilt.

SANDFORD.

You touch there upon an evil which an intellectual age has often lamented—namely, that disbelief, which is or may be a pure act of the judgment, should be branded with the character of guilt. I have been lately reflecting on this subject. It is commonly said that the formula, "Believe or perish!" represses inquiry. I think, on the contrary, that modern Europe owes to this formula the amount of religious

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inquiry we find in it. The old religions were religions of rites and ceremonies, which had merely to be practised ; the new was a religion of doctrines, which, in order to be believed, must first be defined, and, in some sense, understood. What were these saving doctrines, became a momentous inquiry. There is no need to say that the inquiry was often limited within a very narrow arena. This compression, however, made it the more intense in its character ; it confined and animated the controversy. In heathen times only a few philosophers were interested in what we call religious truths —that is, truths which can be supported by human reasonings. But wherever Christianity has continued to be a system of doctrines, and has not sunk (as amongst some ignorant populations it has done) into a mere mythology, there the people at large have become interested in abstract religious reasonings. And once interested in such reasonings, the barriers of churches and sects will not always be found to be impassable—will at least, here and there, be overleapt by the boldest of the flock. A

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doctrinal religion, that rests salvation on a creed, has been the main instrument of exciting thought amongst the people.

ADA.

It seems to me, Mr Sandford, that you are very busy of late in finding "a spirit of good in things evil." I confess to you that I feel this course of observation very embarrassing. If I saw so much utility in error as you do, I am afraid I should be in danger of losing my love of truth.

SANDFORD.

Not so. There is no inconsistency between a genuine love of truth and a readiness to acknowledge that any great idea which has ruled the world under the title of truth, and operated widely on human society, must have had an adaptation to the times in which it predominated. Remember that no age chooses error in preference to truth; it lives on its error, taking it for knowledge; it lives with the sentiment of truth, and we ourselves can do no more. It must always be an irresistible

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impulse, and the greatest of all our achievements, to discover and proclaim the truth.

Those who produced their well-adapted error, produced it as an eternal truth; else it would not have answered its purpose. And we also think our eternal truths from a given position of human society, and may be producing new adaptations to new forms of that society.

ADA.

You even seemed disposed, on one occasion, to defend persecution. How you can applaud a "saving creed" as an instrument for exciting thought, and also approve of that persecution which represses such thought as it excites, I cannot comprehend.

SANDFORD.

Never, never did I approve of the persecution that represses thought. What I said was this,—there is a period in the life of a society when the action of the state is—not to repress thought, for no thought has been developed—but to *impress* on blank intelligence certain

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opinions or faiths. This action of the state-power may be beneficial. The society advances—thought has been excited—and the state-power becomes then repressive, and acts prejudicially. But no power of this kind can be suddenly withdrawn, and to a certain extent one may look upon a repressive persecution as the inevitable overflow of a power once simply of an *institutional character*.

Indeed, there is nothing I value so highly as the liberty that sets free the intellect. But toleration is, in a peculiar manner, the result of a large culture of the human mind, and cannot be expected in the earlier stages of society. Definite ideas of the province of jurisprudence, and of the nature of the act which ought to be the subject of a penal law; a loyalty to society which does not need the support nor require the unanimity of religious creed; respect to those intellectual energies of thoughtful men by which they are led on from truth to truth; elevated notions on religion itself;—all these are elements of that state of public opinion which would be truly tolerant.

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Happily the mere balance of religious parties has produced, in this and other countries of Europe, an enforced toleration, a compromise, a truce, under which the public mind is advancing to the true attitude of voluntary forbearance and mutual respect.

ADA.

I perceive that this progress of society sets you at ease on many points. I must try what it will do for me. Perhaps we hear the agitation only of what will by-and-by be an equable truth—

> The stream we hear amongst the rocks
> Will fertilise some other land.

Perhaps that simpler form of Christianity which my soul is longing for, may be the "church of the future" which others will believe in quite peacefully and approvingly. I may not be altogether wrong, *socially*, in giving way to my own *individual* perception of the truth.

SANDFORD.

You cannot be.

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ADA.

You shall explain this to me some other day. Now I must be going. Will you give me your arm? You have assisted my broken steps before this.

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CONVERSATION IV.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN SOCIETY INSEPARABLE FROM CONTEST AND DIVISION.

MANSFIELD, ADA, SANDFORD.

WE were again assembled in the General's library. One of us was turning over the leaves of the folio edition of Captain Cook's Voyages.

MANSFIELD.

How that book haunted me when I was a boy! What a longing it inspired to travel in other climates and amongst other races of men! The canoe of the savage, the palm-trees of Otaheite, and the graceful men and women dancing beneath them—these were the marvels of the world to me. I did not suspect that an English home, a summer's day in this northern island,

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with a few white friendly faces round me, was the last and most marvellous product of our habitable and our *living* world. Now, I would not barter one such day for all that all the islands of the Pacific, or the whole continent of Asia, could bestow.

ADA.

But you are glad to have seen other climates and other races. I confess to a great curiosity to know what a savage really is.

MANSFIELD.

My eye fell just now on a passage in that book you are turning over, which does not speak very highly in favour of the savage. Captain Cook somewhere tells us that he might have exterminated the whole population of the island he was visiting; for every tribe came in turn to ask his help to destroy some neighbouring tribe. One sees a mere aggregate of men, or families, getting their subsistence each in the same way, and bound together for the sake of that strength of attack or defence

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which union gives them. Our friend Sandford here would tell us, with his usual philosophic impartiality, that union springs from hostility, as well as affection, or rather that the union *within* and the hostility *without* spring up together; that the first friendly compact was also a hostile one, and that society was inaugurated by hate as well as love.

SANDFORD.

The tribe, as you remark, though a gathering together of men by their social affections, is defined and cemented by some common danger; and if we trace the onward progress or development of society, we shall find that the coherence of any class or order of men has been preserved by its antagonism to some other class. When an aristocracy, for instance, arises, the union that constitutes it a class is manifestly due to the common desire to domineer and rule over the rest of society.

Society develops itself, through its earliest stages, by this separation into classes which act and react upon each other. First comes a

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ruling class of wealthy and strong-handed men—no bad institution, though it has a look of harshness. Then an intellectually ruling class—a class of thinkers (priests, poets, and philosophers all in one)—makes its appearance. A sheltered space is found in the expanding organisation of society for mental industry: the grand task of man, the discovery of truth, commences. By-and-by the intellectual class further divides: the poet separates from the priest, and the philosopher from both.

Now this process of development—this formation of new classes and divisions of men—though in some cases the result of the quite peaceful and gradual accession of knowledge or of new ideas, is, in other cases, quite inseparable from contests and animosities of some description or other.

Where we find a very strong spirit or principle of union in any one body of men, we find also that that body stands opposed in some manner to other bodies of men. Thus the *union* of man with man (a thing we especially admire and approve) is intimately connected

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with *opposition* between man and man—a thing we very naturally lament, and do all we can to appease.

MANSFIELD.

Your case is made out in the national union, which is a compact for offence and defence. Small states or tribes, amongst which none has obtained a great predominance, are equally animated by the spirit of conquest and the spirit of defence. When nations of unequal magnitude or power have grown up in juxtaposition, we have the patriotism of defence developed signally in the one, and the patriotism of conquest in the other: they must always coexist. We sympathise more cordially (as is quite fit) with the patriotism that repels invasion; but this could not have been excited without the patriotism of conquest. Without an Edward, no Wallace; without the Persian host, no Marathon.

SANDFORD.

Good; and, looking within the society itself, we find that the union of a class is accompanied

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by hostility to some other class. It is not the hostility of war, or it would be incompatible with the national union; but it has often approached it, as when a privileged class of nobles sustain themselves by domination over the common people. Such a class has the virtues and the vices which power produces. The more peaceful unions of men of trade and commerce —the guilds and corporations of past times— were in part the result of the license of the noble or warlike class: they have generally been organisations for self-defence. A priestly class, though its function is of the highest order, has its union cemented by the necessity to defend itself against other classes, and by the desire to subjugate the people. It is animated both by the spirit of conquest and the spirit of defence.

As we ascend into still more subtle distinctions which modern society displays, the nature of the opposition is still more subtle and refined in its character. The manners of the gentry are partly sustained by their contrast to those of the common people; the temper of the

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philosopher by the headstrong faith of the multitude; the saint is partly uplifted by his antagonism to the world. Whether it is a stoical philosophy, or an evangelical church, the high exclusive standard of the little world *within* is supported by its opposition to the greater world *without.*

ADA.

What a spirit of *war* runs down through all society, from the savage to ourselves, and ourselves in our best of moods! But the war tempers itself, and becomes only an opposition of thought, opinion, manners.

MANSFIELD.

There is one instance belonging to our own times which you might have added, Sandford: I mean the union of the workmen to defend their interests, or their supposed interests, against the capitalists. These unions have been occasionally productive of great mischief, but through all their mischief I descry, and must appreciate—the union itself. Banded together against the

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capitalists, the workmen have learned to unite for a common interest. I could wish them to understand their own position better than they seem to do, but I must admire that spirit of union which has enabled men to endure much hardship in defence of what they believe their common interest. The efforts which the higher classes have made to assist in the elevation of the workman shall have no disparagement from me; but all the bland teaching imaginable of another class can do nothing for them, compared to a spirit of union such as this—a determination to defend and to advance their own interests *as a body*.

SANDFORD.

That is rather a bold assertion. It is well we do not live in a manufacturing district. We should be set down for democrats and agitators.

MANSFIELD.

We live here like the gods, Sandford, embracing in our calm survey the interests of all classes. From these conflicts will come forth

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purer equity and more stable peace. Who knows but ultimately our *class moralities*, which have raised each class in turn, may not submerge in one great sentiment of concern for the interest *of the whole?* But meanwhile these class-moralities, if they are found in one section of society, should be found in others also.

SANDFORD.

Next let us mark this: In a rude or primitive state of society, man is chiefly educated by his relationship with nature. The soil, the climate, the wild beasts about him, have more to do with his development than ideas gathered from his fellow-men. When knowledge of various kinds has been attained, and incorporated in arts and institutions, the proportions are altered; the man is educated more by the society of fellow-men into which he is born, than by his direct relationship with external nature. The very society which is itself the production of human thought, becomes the mould for the formation of successive generations of men.

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ADA.

There is a striking analogy here between the growth of a tree and the growth of a society. Each year the summer-leaves add to the stem and the branches, and each successive year the leaves are produced in greater numbers, and are uplifted higher and higher into the blue air by the rising stem and the expanding branches.

Only our society-tree does not grow, it seems, with the same tranquillity as its prototype. From root to topmost branch there is constant stir and controversy, and interminglings of love and hate.

How plainly everything speaks of a progressive development! Here is Literature. What an instrument of culture it is, indispensable as it seems to us! yet it had to be written by the race of men which was to profit by it. Suppose that history had given us no account of a people without a literature, we must still have inferred that a time existed when men had no books —when they had not even any oral literature. And the sacred books of a nation, which in one aspect form but a branch of its literature

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—these, too, had to be written—had to be thought out.

But I fear I interrupted you, Mr Sandford.

SANDFORD.

Not at all: your observation concurs with one I was going to make. There is one class of ideas, the religious, which more than any other moulds the character of men; it is a class of ideas also which, from its nature, excites the strongest emotions. Add to all this that it is a class of ideas which lies open to much debate and opposition. Now by what conceivable contrivance could it have been brought about that the necessary discussion of these ideas could have taken place without leading to the most violent contest between the partisans of the old ideas and their assailants? The virtues of the commonwealth have been long associated with their teaching. How avoid a terrible collision?

MANSFIELD.

Here, certainly, there can be no advance without conflict.

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It is not only the gathered *truth* that the individual born into a given society receives; the traditional *error* is just as zealously adopted. But a system of religious opinions that has been made an instrument of education for the whole community, is no longer a mere collection of truths or propositions addressed to an intellect which is free to choose or to reject. The interests of society have gathered round such a system. It is enforced by all on each, just as a rule of morality is enforced; and individual men may for a long time secretly canvass or dispute such a system before they will venture openly to disavow it. Truth, to their minds, seems at variance with expediency.

All this, as you say, appears inevitable. Neither need we, on this great subject of religious development, turn over the pages of history for an example. Over all Europe there is going on, at this present moment, a contest between the Old and the New. Amongst Catholic nations this conflict may again assume the form of a religious war. Let us hope that in Protestant countries it will be limited to the

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bitterness of controversy. In England we have happily the arena of a free parliament in which our disputes may one day be fought out.

ADA.

I wonder whether Posterity, writing the history of the times we live in, will speak of them as remarkable for the agitation of religious questions.

MANSFIELD.

There is evidently more commotion in this region of thought than there was half a century ago. Whether it will end in any results which history will have to record, who can tell? Perhaps it is a movement whose results will be deferred for many centuries. Perhaps it is a movement merely of oscillation. It is almost impossible to decide. Each one of us is tempted to give his verdict according to the bias of his own opinions. We are all agreed that truth must ultimately prevail; and each one believes, of course, that his own religious convictions are the truth. Whether the old or the new will triumph, will be very confidently

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and quite oppositely predicted by the partisans of the old and the new. Nay, the very accuracy of these titles, old and new, will be often a subject of controversy; and what one proclaims to be the new theology, another will describe as an ancient exploded error, or a miserably imperfect theology.

ADA.

What do you mean, uncle, by the new? for there are so many kinds of the new. There is the Neology of the Christian divine; there is the Theism of the philosophical divine.

MANSFIELD.

Very true, Ada. The new takes various forms: in some it means a new interpretation of revelation; in others it is the revived contest between reason and revelation.

I am not discussing the subject from my own personal point of view—I am rather looking at English society; and I ask myself what it is that distinguishes our present state of religious commotion from that of preceding centuries.

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In the two great subjects of study—history and the physical sciences—considerable advances have been lately made. These advances have *told* upon theology.

In some, the influence exhibits itself in a modification of the generally received form of Protestant Christianity; in others it displays itself in a wish to place religious truth on the sole basis of the human reason. Which of these parties will prevail? Or will either of them prevail? He must be something of a prophet who can determine.

I never yet attended a popular lecture on science where the lecturer did not conclude with assuring his audience that there was no discrepancy between the two great teachers, Science and Revelation, and the lecturer was always applauded for this comfortable assurance. What more certain sign could I have that there exists an uneasy feeling as to the perfect harmony between these two great teachers?

But the applause which invariably greets the lecturer may be also said to prove that such uneasy feeling is kept in due subjection—that

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it is a secret which his audience do not even utter aloud to themselves. The mass of English society, strong in numbers, appears to stand rooted in its ancient faith. The impenetrable forest stands firm, each tree sheltered or sustained against the wind by that very *forest* which it helps to make.

SANDFORD.

Here and there our forest, whether for good or for ill, seems to open to the wind.

MANSFIELD.

Yes; it is dangerous to talk in metaphor. There are indications in our *literature* which show considerable movement in that class— which perhaps does not generally attend popular lectures upon science.

SANDFORD.

You must have noticed, on your return from India, that the tone of our controversial literature had somewhat changed during your absence.

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MANSFIELD.

When I returned to England, nothing struck me more than the increased zeal and earnestness in *all* parties throughout the domain of religious inquiry. But that which seemed to me most noteworthy was the approximation between a philosophical and critical section of the Christian Church and those who avowedly trust themselves to the speculations of human reason. It seemed to me that there was a small party almost prepared to yield the principle of Revelation, if they could be assured that certain great religious truths would be generally acknowledged as founded on human reason. On the other hand, a grave and pious scepticism had arisen amongst us, such as feels its responsibility to God and man, and asks itself anxiously how it is to take charge of society, if society should be thrown upon its hands. I could not but observe how much there is of the believer in our modern sceptic, how much of the sceptic in some of our modern believers.

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ADA.

And how much also of new and ardent faith in some of our modern Christians.

MANSFIELD.

It may be so. You have read more of this literature, Ada, than I have done. What has made itself evident to me is rather a new spirit of criticism than a new spirit of faith; and a spirit of criticism whose tendency is hostile to what, for the sake of brevity, one may call *the principle of Revelation.* If we were to limit our scrutiny to what is passing in one portion only of the wide field of controversy, we should say that it was this principle which was being put upon its trial.

ADA.

You would not say that it was the *intention* of such critics to throw their weight on the side of Reason as opposed to Revelation; they only wish, as it appears to me, to harmonise the truths derived from both sources.

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MANSFIELD.

I do not judge of their intention; I speak only of a tendency which they probably would dispute. Still less would you hear from me any censorious judgment on the quite indisputable discrepancy between some of their conclusions and those Articles of their Church to which they have subscribed. It is an immoral thing, formally, and on certain public occasions, to assent to statements we do not really believe. But subscription to an elaborate series of theological propositions by a young man of two or three and twenty (we can all remember what clever self-satisfied young gentlemen we were at that age—how much we *knew*, how little we had *thought*), cannot be supposed to bind a man either not to examine those propositions, or if he examines, and dissents from some of them, not to express his convictions, but to play the part of a hypocrite during the rest of his life. Our legislators should take the case into consideration, and modify their Act of Uniformity. I am only concerned with a *tendency*

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exhibited in our literature, whether lay or clerical.

For instance, some of our biblical critics, discoursing on the earlier revelation to the Hebrews, explain much of it as "adaptation" to the ignorance of the age and the peculiarities of the people. It is true, they observe, that we see those same ideas, customs, and rites prevalent amongst the Jews, which, when we meet with them amongst the pagans, we unhesitatingly describe as errors and superstitions, the result of fanciful analogies or of human imaginations. We have a temple in which a national god is supposed to reside, we have propitiation by sacrifice, we have the slaughtered ox, the libation, the oracle, the belief in divine judgments executed supernaturally in this world: all these, they say, were *adaptations* to the weakness or ignorance of man. If so, we naturally ask why the Hebrew mind could not produce for itself these adaptations as well as the Greek or Chaldean mind? It is not very logical to call them *adaptations to the errors* of a given

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epoch; they are the errors themselves—the modes of religious thought that mark a certain stage in human development.

ADA.

But in the revelation to the Hebrews, these errors or mistaken rites were introduced to obtain readier admission for certain truths which *were* exclusively revealed to them.

MANSFIELD.

I am not sure that the class of critics I am speaking of would agree with you that the Hebrews were at any time in exclusive possession of the great truths you allude to. They stand pre-eminent amongst the nations of the earth for their piety, for their sentiments of devotion. But such great truths as monotheism and the immortality of the soul apparently arise in the human mind (in their time and place) quite as spontaneously as belief in oracles or the efficacy of sacrifice. The Hebrews certainly did not teach all other nations the doctrine of the immortality of the soul.

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But I am not entering myself into these controversies. What I wanted to observe with regard to this theory of *adaptation* is, that the critic who adopts it must necessarily sit in judgment upon the revelation itself, and decide, by appeal to the reason of mankind—to the reason, in fact, of his own cultivated contemporaries—what in that revelation is true or false, what portion was provisional and expedient only, and what remains as eternally true.

ADA.

I have never felt distressed by difficulties met with in the Old Testament. I am not both Jew and Christian; my religion comes in with Christ.

MANSFIELD.

But our critics extend the same mode of criticism from the Old Testament to the New. Here, too, we meet with the same *adaptation*. A people, for instance, who believe in devils, have their belief in devils frankly sanctioned. Here too, an ignorant, imaginative, quite unscientific populace was addressed, and the ad-

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dress adapted to its prepossessions. Here, too, the critic tacitly places himself in the position of judging what part of the revelation remains true for him. I am far from accusing the neologist, as he is termed, of intending to subvert the authority of revelation; but I say that he assumes, tacitly or openly, that there are parts of it which we *outgrow*. This once admitted, who is to say how much we are to outgrow? or when we ceased, or shall cease, from growing? No authority is really left but that of human reason.

This very separation from the Old Testament which you, with so many others, seem very willing to make, would be itself a most astounding assertion of the supremacy of human judgment. The whole doctrine of the Messiahship of Christ would need some new interpretation. I know not what licence it would not be necessary to take with the *second* revelation, after having dismissed the *first*. One learned man, and not a layman, who was, but is no longer, a contemporary, seemed disposed to cut the cable, and swing

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loose from the Old Testament; nay, to swing loose from all miracle, as a conception belonging to the old and bygone world. The same writer permitted, indeed, the faithful to believe in miracles, but gave, at the same time, such a description of the respective provinces of faith and reason as put the partisans of the former entirely out of the pale of argument.

ADA.

Faith, or the truth derived from revelation, is surely the *complement* of reason, or of the truth derived from the normal exercise of our mind—not the *antagonist*. There must be a harmony between the two classes of truth. We must, at least, believe that this harmony would be perceived, if the knowledge derived from our own reason were more complete. I apprehend the difference lies here: If a man starts from revelation, he charges the obscurity and conflict he meets with to the defect of the knowledge obtained by his reason. If he starts from reason, he charges the obscurity and confusion he meets with upon revelation.

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MANSFIELD.

Very true, very true. I am only criticising our modern critics. Some take a mere fragment of the New Testament, and erect a creed upon that. One picks me out this beautiful text, "The kingdom of heaven is within you," and forthwith runs up a system in accordance with our latest notions of education and progress. Heaven is a state of mind, and not a place, and a state of mind that is to grow more complete and more general with the increasing intelligence of successive generations. Thus Christianity is the great instrument of our progress, and itself refines with that progress it aids. All this is in perfect unison with our present modes of thinking. Moreover, it expresses an actual fact, and a phase of the subject that is most literally true. But how am I to take this text, and ignore a hundred others which are conceived in a quite different and antique mode of thought?—which are based on the conception of an early and abrupt termination of our terrestrial humanity, and a new order of things attained, not

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by subsequent generations of living men, but by the risen dead?

ADA.

I do not know to whom you allude in your last instance. I have heard laymen content themselves for a moment with such partial representations of Christianity, but no systematic writer on theology.

MANSFIELD.

Such train of thought has come before me, I will not be positive from what quarter—perhaps from some one more poet than divine. The severest blow, however, that in my time has been dealt against revelation, came from one who is certainly no poet—came from a metaphysician—the Oxford champion of orthodoxy. The metaphysics of the Bampton Lecturer who lately excited so much attention, may, for aught I know, stand their ground with any other system, whether of German or Scotch extraction. With these I enter into no controversy. Such limits as he describes *may*

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exist to the human intellect, though I should be sorry to believe it. A true conception of God, or of the Absolute (the title he prefers), may be simply impossible. But if so, no language (whether spoken by a man working miracles or not) *can* reveal Him. Revelation of God is simply impossible.

The great argument from design gives us the attributes of intelligence and benevolence. We say we have before us an intelligent and benevolent Being. Resting in this argument, we have a distinct, though partial, conception of God, and one from which we can reason. Now it would be extreme want of candour for any one accustomed to these discussions to ignore the difficulties which many sincere and powerful thinkers find in this argument from design, or in the conception of God to which it leads. Let us say that our metaphysician has found these difficulties insuperable. We throw not the least reproach upon him on this account. But the flagrant and unpleasing contradiction lies here, —that it should be such a man who stands

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forward to enforce upon us the belief in the miracle!

A miracle without a God is simply an unexplained fact—an exceptional power which some one (who is or seems a human being) possesses. On what ground am I to infer that a human being who works a miracle *therefore knows everything, or knows God?* To one who already believes in a God, the miracle itself immediately connects the man with God. God works the miracle through him, and God speaks through him. My faith is in God. But if I could place myself in the position of a man who witnessed a miracle, and who did not already believe in a Creator, my faith must entirely rest on *this wonderful man before me.* The ordinary process of reasoning by which the miracle convinces is gone. This wonderful man is, for the instant, the only god I know. My faith is in *him.*

ADA.

I thought it was admitted by all our logicians, that in order to base other religious truths on the miracle, the belief in God must

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first be recognised as an independent truth of the human reason. I presume the Bampton Lecturer would admit that nature gives us some *simulacrum* of God upon which the worker of miracles proceeds to construct other useful or "regulative truths" or *adaptations*. Reason and revelation together give us a certain *adapted representation* of the Deity on which human piety can be founded, but which the advanced intellect of some amongst us detects to *be* a mere adaptation to our infirmity.

I can understand some such reasoning in a sceptic. I have had thoughts something like these myself, when I have been in a desponding mood; but then, in that mood, miracle and inspiration were but other names for human imaginations.

I will not meddle with the Oxford metaphysician. If he can reconcile his doctrine of the impotence of human reason with belief in revelation, I, for one, feel no interest in such an achievement. But I confess that I follow with my utmost attention the labours of those

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who employ their philosophy and learning in so modifying the teaching of the Church as to bring it into accordance with the historical knowledge and the advanced science of the age. The whole Thirty-nine! What if only nine articles remained to us? What if only a few of the words of Christ could be blazoned for ever upon our banner, and lead us on to conquest over evil? A few words from the eternal God might be hope and guidance to millions after millions, to countless generations of mankind. You think that the elimination (from our sacred books) of what is imperishable truth from what was transitory in its nature, cannot be logically effected. It must be all or none. When the first school of Protestantism arose, how many able and acute Catholics predicted that it would be impossible for those who relinquished so much, to retain anything at all! Protestantism was confidently proclaimed to be the prelude to infidelity. The prelude has been playing these three hundred years.

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MANSFIELD.

And a good Catholic might perhaps say that, at last, the prediction was about to be fulfilled. I do not say so. Another three centuries will probably be listening to the same prelude.

The Lutheran Reformation was built on *faith* —on an ardent and new faith in the supremacy of the Scriptures. Our reformers are pre-eminently critics of these very Scriptures, and their faith goes out towards those truths which are supposed capable of standing without the authority of an inspired writing. Their criticisms may be swept away, as trivialities which do but impede and embarrass the public faith; or they may prepare the way for an era of philosophic schemes of Deism. I do not see how they can play a part analogous to that of the Lutheran Reformation. The faith of our reformers is substantially given to reason, and not to revelation.

ADA.

But all are not mere critics. Some are zealous in a new faith, and a faith drawn

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directly, by a more intelligent interpretation, from the very same source as the most popular form of Christianity is drawn. If I see pious churchmen building confidently on St Paul himself for their modified views of Christianity, does it not look like the springing up of some reformed church amongst us?

I grant you that many of these critics seem to me in the position of one who stands upon a wall, and uses his pickaxe to knock out the loose bricks under his feet. They cannot resist the impulse to knock out the loose bricks, though they are standing above them. But all are not of this kind.

MANSFIELD.

Where do you see a nucleus or rallying-point for any new church or sect amongst our advanced Christians? Each seems to pick his way separately.

ADA.

I think I see such rallying-point in the new interpretation given to the metaphorical language (if such it be) of St Paul, on the subject of

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the atonement. A doctrine of atonement that denies a sacrifice in the old heathen meaning of the term, and at the same time accepts the Mediator, the Reconciler, the Restorer, gives a position within Christianity itself, both *uniting* very many, and *disuniting* those from the prevailing type of Christianity. Reflect, too, how much follows from this view of the atonement.

MANSFIELD.

Perhaps you are right. I venture on no prophecy.—Why have not such men found what they wanted amongst the Unitarians? These make no way amongst us.

ADA.

I, for one, could not contemplate without dread the withdrawal of a divine authority from the teaching of religion. Say that the doctrine of immortality were to rest entirely on the reasonings which I, or another, could bring for its support, how would it fluctuate with our desires, our moods, our theories of life, even the energy with which we live our

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lives! It is true that this doctrine arises in the natural exercise of our reason or imagination: even the Hebrews may not have been indebted for it, in the first instance, to a distinct miraculously authorised proclamation of it by any of their prophets. But Christ confirmed it, for all time, not by His teaching only, but by the great *fact* of His resurrection. This doctrine of immortality which the reason approves, which it even originates, must still be *taught as from above*, else it will have no steadfast objective reality to us—it will always seem like a creation of our own mind, which we can deal with as we please.

There was a voice in the wilderness, and it cried, Repent! And there followed another voice, still more divine, and it said, Love! And the tempest arose—the tempest of wars, invasions, revolutions—and it carried these two voices round the world, and to this moment these divine words are everywhere re-echoed—Repent and Love. Repent that you may be pure, and capable of Loving.

To grieve for our failings, and to love each

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other, this is a teaching worthy of being called divine. Heaven's authority for the pre-eminence of the sentiment of Love—I think much of this. Love is, indeed, the very passion of the reason; for reason, from its nature, can desire only good. Still there are daring moods, and there are daring reasoners, occasionally exalting Hate and Revenge to an almost equal eminence. See how some sweet serviceable Christian soul takes upon itself to love all the afflicted—all, even the guilty. Wherever there is sickness and distress, or crime, which is a sickness of the soul, the Christian comes—if possible to heal, always to soothe and commiserate. You will say—no, not either of you, but some stern jurisprudential moralist will say—that this universal charity tends to obliterate the distinctions between virtue and vice—that it counteracts the moral opinion of society, which demands that love and kindly service be withdrawn from the criminal. But this universal love, remember, is love with tears in its eyes—love that will not cease to weep and protest till the guilty one has turned from his

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guilt—till he too can repent, and can love. Nay, the Christian is the true philosopher; for shining through all his inevitable censure of the criminal is his deep compassion that the man should *be* a criminal—deep compassion, which he recognises as a divine sentiment,—which he hears in the *last word* God has uttered out of eternity to His suffering and bewildered creatures.

To love is the great glory, the last culture, the highest happiness; to *be* loved is little in comparison. Amongst our strangely complicated relationships of life, it often seems as if the loved one had all the advantage. To him the service, for him the sacrifice; from him, perhaps, no return. You pity some deluded mother, impoverishing herself for a reprobate son, who laughs as he spends her little hoard. Do not pity—admire rather; she is happier than a thousand reprobates. She loves. Oh, if One really existed, as I and others believe, who loved all the world, and in some inexplicable way suffered for its salvation, he was a God, at least, in his sublime happiness. Nor

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should I say that it was a "religion of sorrow" that such a love had inaugurated.

MANSFIELD.

Very good, my dear and eloquent Ada. And who shall say through how many ages, and through what subtle changes of form, a scheme of theology may survive that has such *a heart in the centre of it?* Why are you so silent, Sandford? Why do you let me and my niece have all the conversation to ourselves?

SANDFORD.

Because, as you know, I like better to listen than to talk; and also because what you were saying awoke a train of thought in my own mind.

MANSFIELD.

You were listening then, in fact, to yourself. Take back your compliment—if for compliment you intended it—most deceptive of listeners. But what was the train of thought?

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SANDFORD.

I was thinking of this antagonism between faith and doubt, and how much of our intellectual life depends upon it. No popular faith has ever existed that did not claim a supernatural origin. The idea of revelation starts with religion itself: it is the first form in which a belief of God appears; for in early times *the* god was supposed to have revealed himself personally—to have appeared at least in vision or in dream, if not in visible form, to the open eye of man. And no god was ever worshipped with the simplest rites, but those rites and ceremonies were supposed to have been in some way prescribed by the god himself. No ceremony ever obtained the sanction of time and numbers without being traced to the command of the god, or the god-instructed priest; in what other way was man supposed to learn what would please the divinity? So, too, if religious precepts and doctrines were written in a book, and the book came to have authority, it would assuredly be referred to the inspiration of some divinity, and this whether the writer

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of it had claimed such inspiration or not. It is thus that some of the highest products of human thought, and some of the best precepts of morality, have assumed stability and predominance, and asserted a sway over the whole national mind. What great instruments of culture such revealed or inspired faiths have been there is no need to say. Nevertheless it was also necessary, in order that they should fulfil their office well as teachers of mankind, that an antagonistic spirit of doubt and free inquiry should coexist with them; for otherwise the teaching by authority would become stationary or retrograde. If free inquiry has been altogether checked, the earlier period of a religion may be more pure and intellectual than the later; there may be an unchecked growth of fable. The teaching by divine authority could alone impress and unite the multitude; but this requires to be advanced, corrected, and improved by the criticism of those who think untrammelled by authority. In Europe, no faith founded on revelation has ever been of that implicit and universal character as to reduce

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to utter inactivity the inquiring reason of man. Such an ideal faith would have been a great calamity. Nay, if nothing but truth were embraced under the name of a revealed faith, a faith that extinguished the highest energies of the human intellect, reducing it to the office of a passive recipient, would have been no boon, but a great disaster. In all progressive countries we see the new thoughts, which are generated both within and without a priesthood, either introducing themselves gradually (under the form, perhaps, of new interpretations) into the authorised system; or, if greater change is called for, we see what amounts to a new system growing out of the old.

And all this time philosophy itself gets its force, and energy, and standing-room in the world by its very antagonism to some popular faith. Both parties thrive by their partial hostility or repulsion. There is no *power* where there is no *resistance.* This holds good elsewhere than in mechanics. It holds good in the case of all our philosophies. Those who speculate on the dying-out of a divinely au-

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thorised teaching, must substitute for the old controversy between Reason and Revelation other controversies between systems all acknowledging themselves to be the products of reason, or of the unassisted faculties of the human mind. One is sometimes asked, Could philosophy give a faith to society?—give it on her own simple authority? My answer has been, Not one faith, perhaps, but many. Not, perhaps, that one ideal faith which is to unite all the nations of mankind (though I, too, must sometimes dream of such a faith, because I, too, have my truth, which, being truth, claims universality), but certainly those various speculative creeds, whose antagonism keeps the mind strung to its utmost tension. The doctrine of immortality would, in such a state of things, be boldly canvassed and disputed, but it might also have very many earnest believers. On this great doctrine I will venture to make one practical observation. It is not desirable that *all* men should believe in it with that constant energetic faith with which it is very desirable *some* men should believe in it. If all men had the

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faith which transports them in imagination into some future life, the present world would lose its interest; if no class of men had such a faith, then the world at large would lose a hope which refines and elevates the general tone of thought.

You blamed me, General, for silence; you will now wish to reduce me to silence again. I am ashamed of having delivered such a lecture.

MANSFIELD.

Lecture! nonsense! How can there be any talk if each one has not in his turn some room to utter himself. The worst thing between us is, that we agree too nearly for animated discussion. Yet on subjects of this nature a marked difference of view prevents all conversation whatever. How little oral discussion there is amongst men who have once taken up their different intellectual positions! After the age of thirty, I think two men of decidedly opposite views, never enter into the clash of *viva voce* controversy.

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ADA.

Yet with our vicar, who is a stanch churchman, you sometimes talk energetically enough. Conversation, at least, flows on without any apparent restraint.

MANSFIELD.

Our vicar is one of a thousand. His cheerful temperament, his habit of society, his high-bred courtesy, the sobriety of his views, his temperate zeal, make him as delightful in private companionship, as he is excellent in the pulpit, or beneficent in the parish. But there is no controversy where he is present. There is, as you say, no feeling of restraint, because he is a cultivated man, who can talk upon a thousand subjects. He belongs to a class of clergymen who, I suspect, are becoming extinct; they never were very numerous, and they are now pressed upon by the two great increasing parties, one on their right, the other on their left—the High-Church or Anglo-Catholic party, and the Evangelical or Calvinistic party. These two sections of the Church, active, enter-

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prising, and full of doctrinal zeal, are leaving no room for that quiet section who regarded the Church, first of all, as the great instrument for promoting the virtue and piety of mankind, and who rather reposed upon their own learning, than were anxious to make use of it for the purposes of controversy. They, in their quiet way, reconciled St Paul and St James, and occasionally taught their congregations that revelation was in fact highest reason—reason raised one step higher than she alone would have ascended, by aid of a hand stretched out from heaven. On some topics they adopted a discreet silence. These men, earnest, learned, tolerant, with nothing better than a general zeal for virtue and piety, are looked upon with some contempt by the present generation of churchmen; they neither satisfy the enthusiastic and elated Calvinist, nor the devout and prostrate Anglican.

SANDFORD.

Even their orthodoxy is not allowed to pass unquestioned. Some of their hearers, frightened by most confused reports of German

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Rationalism, find Neology in every learned criticism, or in reflections which have been gathered from old English divines. It is a proof how the air is charged with this kind of theological disquietude, that even in this remote village of Gravenhurst, our quiet vicar, who never quotes any one later than Butler or Cudworth, Barrow or Balguy, has been accused of newfangled doctrine, opposed to I know not what articles of the Church of England.

MANSFIELD.

Indeed! I never heard of this. What is it, Ada?

ADA.

I have heard of nothing except that there is a gossiping party in the village led on by Mr Greystock, who have made the discovery that our vicar is "tainted with Rationalism"—so runs their phraseology. It is the mere gossip of a few tea-tables, and yet I should not wonder if that Mr Greystock were found writing some day to the Bishop, claiming inquiry, &c. He would glory in such a deed.

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MANSFIELD.

If he dares! I will have him hooted at by all the little boys of the village. I will have him drummed out of the parish.

SANDFORD.

Put in the stocks! sent on parade! or say, on sentinel duty for six hours at a stretch! Oh, my General! the retired ironmonger, let us hope, would cover himself with ridicule by any such application to the Bishop; but if not, and if any party must take to flight, it is we who should have to beat a retreat.

MANSFIELD.

I hear the wheels of your pony carriage, Ada. You can take a little circuit, and set down Mr Sandford.

SANDFORD.

Thank you; I prefer to walk. After thinking of subjects such as we have been discussing, I find nothing so composing or so grateful as to be alone under the stars of night.

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CONVERSATION V.

EXPLANATORY HINTS ON SEVERAL TOPICS.

SANDFORD—ADA—THE VICAR.

CALLING one morning on Miss Newcome—better known to my readers by the simple name of Ada—I found our learned and agreeable Vicar engaged in deep conversation with her. Nor did it at all surprise me to discover that he had been explaining the grounds of that charge of heresy, or rationalism, which had been raised against him by some of his parishioners. With the exception of her uncle, there was not another person in a district of ten miles round who could so intelligently have listened to his statements as Ada Newcome. The topic had been pretty well discussed before I entered,

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and I mention it chiefly to account for the conversation which followed, and which touched on topics not often canvassed during a morning call in a lady's drawing-room.

Amongst his other offences, it seems that our Vicar had, in one of his sermons, given a very unsatisfactory explanation of that Article of our Church which treats of original sin. According to some of his hearers, he had denied original sin altogether; according to others, he had found nothing *but* original sin to punish in mankind. Either way, he was pronounced to be manifestly wrong. And as he had incurred the anger of the more zealous part of his congregation, by setting his face against certain "revivals" which, in imitation of their neighbours the Welsh, they had sought to introduce into Gravenhurst—this and other similar offences (which might otherwise have passed unnoticed) were not to be easily forgiven. The statement which the Vicar had made on this knotty subject, was something of this kind: "Most certainly," he said, "no man can have sinned till he has *lived*—till he has lived intel-

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ligentially so as to choose between obedience and disobedience. Our Church, therefore, does not and cannot teach that God punishes the depraved nature of man before that depraved nature has manifested itself in actual sin of deed or thought. Original sin must first of all *be sin.* But in every actual sin of deed or thought, God does punish our depraved nature, because it is only a depraved nature that would choose disobedience rather than obedience to the just laws of the Creator." Whether any of his critics suggested a more intelligible statement, I cannot tell, but they agreed in complaining that in this they did not find *their* original sin — whatever that might be—and which (according to their reading of the article) ought to be discernible even in the newborn infant.

VICAR.

You, at least, Mr Sandford, will think this statement sufficiently orthodox. But we shall get no help, I am afraid, from you. Our first premiss—the depravity of man—is, I know,

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the most distasteful of all tenets to the pride of you philosophers.

SANDFORD.

If the tendency to snatch at some pleasure, or yield to some passion of our own, and that even in opposition to what the reason has once recognised to be a good rule of conduct—if this is a proof a fallen, depraved, corrupt nature, all I can say is, that the constitution of human nature is a hopeless riddle, and involved in utter confusion. For nothing is more plain, than that, without this conflict of motives, man could not have been a moral being at all.

VICAR.

If you think this liability to sin is the very condition of a moral obedience, how do you account for God's punishment of sin?—or even for man's punishment of sin, if there is any *justice* in it?

SANDFORD.

Let us speak of human punishment first. If it springs directly from the anger we bear to

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those who have inflicted an injury on us or our friends, it requires and can receive no more explanation than the original passion which led to the injury. It is passion answering passion. If we speak of it as a reflective or legislative act, its has it sole justification in the good result it produces: it secures obedience to a law necessary, or beneficial, to the whole community. I presume it was a fuller and grander scheme of things that the passions of men should be thus kept within bounds by laws *thought out by men* (whether laws of the statute-book or of public opinion), than that they should need no such restraint at all, but operate from the first in perfect social harmony.

What God's punishments are in a future world, I do not decide; nor whether they are of a judicial character, or the consequences of already established laws (a point which is needlessly debated); but this I will very confidently say, that, whatever they are, they will be justified by their beneficent results. They will forward, in some way, the happiness of created beings.

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VICAR.

But, Mr Sandford—and here I am on the broad and common ground of philosophy—your explanation touches only one phase of this great matter. There is justice as well as benevolence in the character of God. It is *character* as well as *happiness* for which God creates us. The conscience of each man tells him that he lies open to *deserved* punishment—to punishment which has not necessarily any reference to his own happiness or the happiness of others. No guilty man feels that he ought to be punished for the benefit that will follow from his punishment; enough he deserves it.

SANDFORD.

Most certainly a criminal who has broken the laws of God or man, and knows that a grave penalty hangs over him, has quite enough to occupy his attention for the time; quite enough in this one association between his crime and its punishment. That this one association should take instant and full pos-

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session of his mind, requires no psychological explanation.

Let such a man, however, have leisure to grow calm, and let him be told that his punishment can answer no good purpose whatever, and he will be the first to exclaim that it is a needless cruelty to punish him; unless, indeed, he has been brought up in abject submission to some despotic government, and has never ventured to look further than the *will* of his sovereign for a reason for his punishment. He would exclaim this very loudly in the case of a human punishment; perhaps in the case of a divine punishment his tongue, and even his thoughts, might be overawed.

VICAR.

You keep your eye fixed on the motives that would influence a jurist or a legislator; I want you to dive into the recesses of a man's conscience—to fasten upon his free-will, and on the self-accusation that follows upon a voluntary wrong. A man who has wilfully broken the law feels that he is a culprit, and

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if you pardon him, he still feels that he is a culprit, and deserves the punishment of one.

SANDFORD.

I do dive—so far as I am able—into the recesses of the conscience-stricken mind. I find there an emotion of terror that I cannot possibly trace to anything but *some threat* issued by man, or supposed to be issued from God. This cannot be a feeling springing up in the solitary mind; the individual mind does not produce the threat and the emotion both.

No man fears a punishment from God unless he has been taught something about that punishment; and his fear for man depends on the nature of his relation to his fellow-men.

This terror of the conscience, therefore, lies in the strong association between certain acts and certain threatenings, more or less precise. Nor can we be surprised at the absorbing character of the emotion, since a criminal has brought down upon himself the penalties of the law, the hatred of his neighbours, and the apprehension of the supernatural punishment of God.

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VICAR.

But there is also his own self-reproach. This pricking of the conscience is always accompanied by the reflection that we could and ought to have done otherwise. If it were a mere association between an act and a punishment, it would occur where the act had been performed, but where no evil, or no disobedience to the law, had been intended.

SANDFORD.

There is nothing mysterious in the connection between the idea of punishment and our free-will. From the nature of the case, it is an *intentional* act that is amenable to punishment; and this intention must be the subject of our regret. This, I presume, is your self-reproach—that anger with ourselves which we feel when we have done what we now so earnestly wish had been left undone. The law governs by means of the *threat* it puts forth. We must have defied this threat—we must therefore have committed an act of intentional or *wilful* disobedience—in order to be the understood sub-

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ject of a penal law. If we have disobeyed the law, but not intentionally, we cannot feel that our punishment is just, or what the law prescribed, because the law was made to visit intentional disobedience only. We have not been guilty of that disobedience which the law was meant to punish; we are so far *innocent.* We should, of course, feel the apprehension of punishment, but no self-reproach.

Why is an *ex post facto* law declared to be unjust? Because here the threat has been omitted. The punished man has not been *governed by the law,* he has been merely hanged by it. So far as he was concerned, the law was merely a vindictive act. But again, this condemnation of an *ex post facto* law does not readily occur in a rude and barbarous age; which suggests to us (what must be borne in mind), that the sharp definitions we now make of justice are the results of experience and thought.

When we promulgate a law to which we attach a penalty, we create in this penalty a new motive of action; we present before all

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men terms for a new *choice.* If any one chooses disobedience and the penalty, he can raise no objection to his own punishment, unless he objects to the law itself as one not necessary to the welfare of society.

An injurious action wilfully performed is the legitimate subject of punishment. But we should deceive ourselves if we imagined that human law could always determine the *wilfulness;* it has to presume this from the nature of the act. Moreover, there are some cases where it is thought so necessary to enforce on all minds *the terror of the penalty,* that the question of intentional or unintentional obedience is not allowed to be raised. If a sentinel sleeps upon his post in time of war, I believe a military authority would not accept it as an excuse that the cold, rendering him torpid, had quite disabled him from resisting sleep. So, too, in times of religious change or disturbance, a priestly authority will not accept it as an excuse for heresy, that the heretic could not help thinking as he did. It is felt to be so necessary to associate heresy with

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the fear of punishment, that this question of intention is passed over. And, in fact, the association between heresy and punishment does keep many from thinking at all in the forbidden direction. The punishment, under certain circumstances, answers its end, but the heretic himself will always feel it as an atrocious act of oppression. All who are *not* heretics will associate a twofold sentiment of guilt with heresy — will call it an offence against God and against society.

VICAR.

I am glad to see that you do not dispute *free-will.* I thought you were one of those modern philosophers who see in human history a legitimate subject for science,—which it cannot be to those who acknowledge the free-will of man.

SANDFORD.

I am not sure that the freedom which man possesses through his reason is not perfectly reconcilable with correct views of science. I certainly do not dispute what is called free-

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will ; I do not dispute — who could ? — that act of choice which, united with our will, or capacity for action, makes it *free-will.*

I imagine we should neither of us care to go into metaphysical subtleties about this mental act of choice. Passion, habit, intellect, are all blended in what we popularly call a choice. But it is really choice only so far as the intellect or judgment is concerned. Choice in the most complex affairs of life is still a development of that faculty of judgment or comparison (perception of difference or agreement) which philosophers of all schools agree in placing amongst the original powers of the human being.

Of two propositions we say, this or that may be true.

Of two proposed actions we say, this or that may be done.

The latter of these states of mind is as indisputable a fact as the former. In both the intellectual act of judgment is performed, though in the latter it is more complicated with our individual susceptibilities and emo-

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tions. In the one we have to select a truth, in the other to choose a conduct. We choose. A judgment is finally pronounced. Other or higher freedom than this, it is beyond the wit of man to conceive.

VICAR.

Let metaphysicians explain it how they will, or can—that we feel we may do a thing or leave it undone, is as certain as any fact in our existence. And this fact seems to lie at the foundation of our morality—of our praise and blame—of the different sentiments we have towards a *person* and a *thing* that has injured us.

SANDFORD.

In that last I think you are going a little too far. The *will* alone—that is, the persistent power giving rise to reiterated attempts to injure us, and calling forth all the passions of a contest—is sufficient to account for a vast difference in our sentiment towards *persons* and *things* that injure us. The philosopher who has been bitten by a ferocious dog, and remembers

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the feeling of anger he had, and perhaps still retains, towards the brute, will acknowledge that it is not necessary to have recourse to the free-will of the moralist to explain a very great difference in the feelings we have towards a living creature that has attacked us, and a stone that has fallen upon us. We do not feel towards the dog as we feel towards a man, but neither do we feel towards the dog as we feel towards a stone. We love and hate, and praise and blame, our own fellow-creatures in very many cases where we distinctly refer to their natural tempers, or their natural powers to please or to excel. When, however, the whole man stands before us in his full character, our praise and blame will bear an especial reference to what have been his chosen motives of conduct—to habits in the formation of which his reason has concurred—to the reason, in short, of the man, as displayed in his affections and conduct.

VICAR.

Reverting to your *rationale* of divine punishment, one thing is clear. There can be ulti-

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mately no ground for God's punishment but God's disapproval of the kind of conduct punished. Because, if we say that He punishes for the sake of suppressing that species of conduct, still, when we ask ourselves, Why is that species of conduct to be suppressed? we have no possible answer but God's disapproval of it.

SANDFORD.

God being one with supreme reason and power, I admit at once the accuracy of your observation. But there is a great difference between saying simply, "I punish because I disapprove," and "I punish because I disapprove, and because my punishment will suppress such conduct in future." The disapproval of *man* is the ultimate ground for the punishment *he* inflicts, but he must clearly see that his punishment tends to suppress the conduct which he disapproves, before he allows himself to act upon his disapproval. Disapproval *alone* is not a ground for punishment.

What we said of human punishments, we must say, I presume, of such punishments as may take

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place in a future world; that it was a grander, fuller, loftier scheme that man should both sin and be punished, and rise through sin and punishment into conscious rectitude, than that he should have lived in that unconscious innocence —if innocence it is to be called—which knows neither good nor evil, which neither obeys nor disobeys. A perfectly harmonised spontaneity seems a poor type of existence compared to submission to a law which man has reasoned out and struggled to obey and get obeyed.

You say well that it is not *Happiness* alone, but *Character*, that is the end of creation in man. But these are not in themselves distinct and conflicting ends. It is in the creation of the *good man* that the highest climax of the happiness-procuring principle is seen. The good character belongs to him who consciously and designedly produces happiness—who not only is raised to the highest kind of felicity himself, but who is a source of felicity to others. Happiness is produced in many other ways, and by the creation of many other beings; but nothing we know of is comparable, in this re-

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spect, to the high and noble *character*, whose creation or development, we must admit, is a costly proceeding. It costs much and many kinds of misery. It overpays them all. The noble character, you perhaps say, is not always happy. He has not every species of happiness; he may have many kinds of suffering; but his nobility of character is always a happiness. And always is he the sustainer and producer of happiness in others.

We place Goodness before Happiness, because in the latter we may be speaking only of enjoyment, and that not of the highest order; while in Goodness we speak of man as the source of happiness, as well as the subject of the higher kind of felicity. Man radiates happiness on man. How is it possible that he should fail to estimate his fellow-being first and chiefly by the light and heat that he *gives?*

VICAR.

I noticed that you said, in passing, that it was a distinction hardly worth canvassing, whether future punishments were to be con-

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sidered as *judicial* or as *natural*—that is, as consequences of our conduct according to laws already established.

It seems to me to be merely a metaphorical use of the term when we speak of the natural consequences of our faults as *punishments.* Punishment means some penalty imposed by God, or man, over and above these natural consequences. When we say that the drunkard is punished by the ill-health which his intemperance incurs, we borrow a term from our judicial proceedings. The primary meaning of punishment would be illustrated by the *stocks* in which the drunkard was formerly placed by the hand of the constable.

Then if we talk of carrying out these natural consequences into another world, what terrible nonsense we fall into! How does the intemperance of the drunkard punish him *there*—by natural consequences? Is he to have *delirium tremens* in that other state of existence also? And as to a man's conscience, the more he has sinned, the more callous it has become. He who goes out of the world with one murder on

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his head, carries a dire remorse with him : he who has committed half-a-dozen murders walks forth stolid as a block.

Besides, as we know nothing of the circumstances of the future world, so as to foretell the new relations into which we bring ourselves, we can gain nothing whatever by calling our punishment the natural consequence of our conduct here. That natural consequence must come upon us with just the same surprise and suddenness as a judicial sentence.

SANDFORD.

Very true. For that and other reasons, it does not seem to me a distinction of any importance.

Punishment is the repression of crime, and I cannot easily conceive of its existence where there is no crime to be repressed. This judicial mode of repressing evil belongs to human society, and springs from the nature of man. The constitution of social man, by which he erects a judicial tribunal, is as much a part of the great scheme of things as the physical or-

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ganisation according to which ill-health follows upon intemperance. In a broad view of the subject, the *stocks* and the *delirium tremens* are both natural consequences, but resulting from a different set of laws or powers.

ADA.

But if we cannot understand how the criminal is punished in a future world through the natural consequences of his criminality, we can understand how the cultivation of piety—of love to God and man—will be *there*, as *here*, its own exceeding great reward. This cultivates us for heaven—for the abode of whatever spirits stand nearer than we do to the throne of God. All the physical universe is brought together, as some astronomer writes, "by the one common element of light;" and in like manner all the spiritual universe must be bound together by the one common element of love—that love which is also reason.

SANDFORD.

Yes, yes! We have a safer basis there to

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proceed upon. Something of the eternally good we know, and can therefore, in some measure, cultivate ourselves for eternity.

VICAR.

I begin, I think, a little better to understand your point of view, Mr Sandford. And it is well that those who reason in part from different premisses should occasionally explain themselves to each other. You consider the future life as some complement or further development of the present, in which, perhaps, all of us will, in some way, struggle forward. This is not quite the heartless philosophy you are sometimes credited with.

People say of you, that while you would teach us admiration of this progressive world, you would shut us up within the limits of a mundane existence—would forbid us to aspire beyond it.

SANDFORD.

I would teach that this life is worthy of our love and admiration, and that God, through our own efforts—that is, of course, through the

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efforts we are constituted to make—is still rendering it more excellent and more happy. But I have never said that the always imperfect knowledge and happiness of man would confine his aspirations within the circuit of our mortal existence. These aspirations, vague as they may be, I take to be an inextinguishable portion of our humanity.

Our earth bends down to itself our rounded sky—makes an ethereal dome for itself out of the infinite space beyond. So it is with our humanity; it rounds a heaven for itself out of the infinite and the eternal. And just as we know that the sky *is*, and yet know that the form it takes is due to our earth; in like manner we may know that the eternal life *is*, and yet feel that the form it assumes to us, is necessarily due to our present humanity. It is a complement to that humanity—is conceived by some relation to it.

ADA.

Take away the earth, and there would be no rounded sky; take away the sky, and earth

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would be like an underground clod which is inhabited by insects.

SANDFORD.

Very little — quite inappreciable — is the influence I can possibly exert on my contemporaries, and, therefore, whether I am faithfully represented or not, is a matter of no moment: even to myself personally it ought to be a matter of no concern, for I lead an obscure life, under an obscure name, and have not a kindness to expect, or a favour to ask, of any but the few friends who already know me. It might appear like an affectation if I were very solicitous about being rightly understood. Let each one trim his lamp the best he can, and see that he has some truth, by the light of which he can live and die. To me it seems *not* a truth that the moral nature of man is some hideous confusion, to be accounted for only by the combination of diabolic and divine agency. To me it seems *not* a truth that the virtue or piety of some amongst us is to be carried forward to higher and higher stages of develop-

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ment, while the blurred and stunted piety of others (for all have *some* piety; all, at least, have *some* goodness in them) shall be extinguished for ever in I know not what eternal horror. To me it seems a truth, that if the present human life opens out into a wider and grander existence, the future and the present will be found to form one great whole, over every part of which the same supreme Wisdom will have presided.

ADA.

"Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream: but what am I?
An infant crying in the night,
An infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry!"

You know these verses? Of course you do. Already these and others from the same poet have taken root in the minds of all cultivated Englishmen. They express thoughts that will never die, and in language that will surely never be surpassed.

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SANDFORD.

I know them well, and feel their truth and beauty. Let the little children that are crying for the light throw their arms around each other's neck, and nestle the closer for the darkness that surrounds them: so will they best subdue the terrors of the night.

VICAR.

If I were disposed, as Mr Greystock asserts of me, to adopt any of the heresies of the day, I think it would be that which foresees at the end of all, the consummation of the good of all. Such a hope is consistent with the spirit, if not with the letter. I cannot read it in the written letter. What is dark to me must remain dark; what appears as sacred truth I cling to with tenfold pertinacity. Some write that the old roads are being broken up, and that men are seeking new paths. I cannot offer myself as guide in the discovery of new paths; I stand, and can only stand, upon the old ones. Another age may perhaps breed for itself teachers of another stamp.

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ADA.

Let me strike upon a note lower down in the scale. When you and Mr Sandford were talking of Choice or Free-will, it occurred to me to ask whether either of you adopted that theory which asserts the original equality of all men's minds, and resolves all our differences into differences of education.

VICAR.

If such a theory were ever seriously put forth, I think Mr Sandford will agree with me that it will never be put forth seriously again. For say the substance *Mind* were alike in all, that other substance, the *Body*—on which, in this life, the manifestations of its consciousness depends—is very different in different individuals; has different temperaments, and many differences of organisation.

ADA.

I was thinking, if that be the case, the act of comparison or of choice, of which Mr Sandford was speaking, must be performed under different conditions in different individuals.

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VICAR.

No doubt of it.

ADA.

And that though the variety of character, to which this variety of temperament gives origin, may add much to the charm of life and its multifarious activities; yet it must prevent the attainment of a uniform standard of morality.

SANDFORD.

There are certain abstinences from evil we do right in claiming from all. We should vainly expect the same positive good, or the same *kind of services* from all.

VICAR.

That variety of character which may be traced to variety of temperament has been a frequent subject of reflection with me. My position of parish priest has brought it often before my notice. I am often compelled to confess that the best people are not the best in every relation of life, and the worst are not

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bad in every relation of life. I find myself growing lenient in my blame, and reticent in my praise. Again and again I say to myself that only the Omniscient can be equitable judge of human beings—so complicated are our virtues with our failings, and so many are the hidden virtues, as well as hidden vices, of our fellow-men.

What would life be if we did not believe in that Invisible Eye that sees all—sees through the intricacies and recesses of human thought! This is something very different from the eye of my neighbour, who sees very dimly, and who, after all, is little better than myself. We all know that there is a perfect Being *who knows us all*, otherwise I think we should by tacit consent drop all efforts after any ideal standard of perfection.

SANDFORD.

The belief in an Omniscient seems to me to grow with our science, and to be the last resting-place both of the intellect and the heart. It results from the unity of this

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multifarious and progressive world, and it reflects back a unity of aim and purpose into our varied humanity. Never did prophecy speak more distinctly the aspirations of the human race than this, that all nations shall be gathered together in worship of the one present and ever-present God.

ADA.

Something like the "division of labour" of our political economists, appears to develop itself amongst our moralities. The growing complexity of life demands and creates the *differently virtuous.* Men who are admirable in private life, fail often in public; and the reverse is as often true.

VICAR.

I have had occasion to make the same observation of your own sex. Here, in Gravenhurst, our public characters are the charitable ladies who visit the poor, who teach in our schools, and sometimes nurse the sick. Now, these excellent people, who gladden, I am sure,

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many a poor man's cottage, do not always gladden their own homes. If you were an ignorant lad, or had broken your leg, one of these energetic ladies would be your good angel; but if you do not happen to want their commiseration—if you want nothing of them but the amenities of cultivated life—you are to them the most wearisome and insipid of mortals.

I say this, of course, in no carping spirit, but merely to illustrate your observation, that if new duties are taken up by the female sex, there will be new specialties of character introduced. There is room for all. I grudge no honour paid to the heroines of the school-room and the hospital; there was a duty left unperformed, and they stepped forward to fulfil it; but I will never consent for a moment to disparage the old sweet feminine character which makes one home the abode of cheerfulness, refinement, and repose. A lamentable thing would it be for England if every unmarried woman of thirty betook herself to the poor for employment. What the poor would

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gain, in the long-run, is very doubtful; or rather, to my mind, is not doubtful at all. What our higher social cultivation would lose, is very evident to me.

SANDFORD.

In that close intimacy with the minds of many of all classes into which you are brought, you must have found much to interest you, and that even in the most commonplace people.

VICAR.

No man is commonplace when you know him intimately. I should be perplexed to say who were commonplace people. Choose your specimen; look through the village of Gravenhurst, and pick out your most decided specimen of the commonplace man. Now sit down before him, and study him. In a very little time you will find something so noteworthy in your specimen, that you will throw it away, and go in search of another. Another and another shall be selected and studied; and so long as you have patience to look steadfastly at

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your man, so long will you be unsatisfied that you have a genuine specimen of the commonplace before you.

SANDFORD.

I am prepared to believe it. I have felt something of the same kind in my own limited observations.

VICAR.

Heaven is very bountiful to us. How heavy seems the burden on that man's shoulder! What strength and patience have grown up beneath the burden!

We owe all to Heaven—even our virtues. I have always felt a certain timidity in dealing out the requisite censures against men who have been led into error by hot impetuous tempers, who probably thirsted after pleasures and excitements which to me and others were no temptations at all. If, when I was a young man at the university, I led a tranquil, temperate, and studious life, I feel that I should be something of a hypocrite were I to claim

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any merit for this. Such was the only life I cared to lead. I hated noise. I preferred fresh air to breathing tobacco-smoke fresh from the mouths of other men. This alone was enough to keep me much in my own rooms. The wine-party was simply detestable. The morning headache had no charms for me. Bacchus amongst his grapes and his satyrs may be a classic subject for art: out of the canvass he is very much of a beast. I have found men wittier as well as wiser when they were quite sober.

Happy those to whom temperate passions have been given! I have known young men absurdly, and even hypocritically boastful of their ungovernable feelings. They, for their part, are all flame! They are all fool! What is a man worth unless he is master of himself?—unless reason, and not passion, is sitting at the helm? And is not temperance the very conservator of that youth they prize so much —which perhaps, indeed, they have not yet learned to prize half enough?

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SANDFORD.

Sometimes the genuine fire and turbulence of youth is but a temporary excess of energy; it will all be wanted before the day is over.

Nations too, as well as individuals, have their temperaments. Here we are generally charitable enough. We condemn a hotheaded man; a hotheaded people we merely notice and describe.

VICAR.

National character is a great puzzle. We first attribute the character of a people to its institutions, and then account for its institutions by the character of the people.

SANDFORD.

When the institutions are not imposed upon them by other nations, there must be something in the people themselves that led to their formation. For this "something in themselves" we are referred to climate, soil, external nature, and to race.

VICAR.

I, who do not believe in originally different

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races, can only explain the character of a nation by the operation of external nature and its own institutions.

SANDFORD.

I suppose that a zoologist would ultimately resolve race into climate or terrestrial position; because, say there were originally different *stocks*, what should make the difference of these stocks, if not some difference, known or unknown to us, in the external nature in which they first appeared?

VICAR.

When I was at Naples, I began by accounting for everything by the peculiarities of the Catholic religion; afterwards I began to suspect that this form of Christianity was due to southern skies, to some such southern populace as I had before me.

SANDFORD.

There is always both action and reaction in these cases. What did Christianity do for Constantinople? and what did Constantinople do

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for Christianity? Religion generally exalts some characteristic of a people—rarely alters it. Where it seems to have altered it—as where it seems to have introduced a pacific instead of a warlike character—there were, in fact, other circumstances at work. What is Christianity *not* doing for England at this moment? It exalts and sustains all the philanthropic energies of the people.

VICAR.

But I am sure you will admit, Mr Sandford, that besides the sanction given to such virtues as society by its own intelligence would produce, there is an especial Christian type of character belonging to our religion, and which dates from its great Founder. The ideal may be blurred by the ignorance and passion of men, but it enters, in turn, every nation in the world.

SANDFORD.

Most readily do I admit it. How often have I wished that there was some way to *utter all the truths at once* that ought to be taken into a

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complete survey of any of these great topics! Most readily do I admit the influence on society, and through generation after generation, of the type of character you mention, and of the many noble exemplars it has had. But it is impossible not also to admit that this very type of character becomes modified by the intelligence of the age or people that receives it as divine. A light travels to us from some distant point in the past centuries, but always it is the atmosphere about us that colours it, reveals or obscures it. The times have been when the Christian character meant a separation from the world. With the exception of alms-giving, the ideal Christian might have passed through life wrapt in contemplation. The ideal Christian of England, in the nineteenth century, is very different. We expect to meet him on every path of philanthropic enterprise. Nay, we like him the better if, in useful industry, he builds up a princely fortune for himself.

If so various a country as England could put forward its model, or "representative man," how would you describe him? He would cer-

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tainly be a Christian, but a Christian who has a zeal for promoting all the temporal interests of society—whether it is a system of drainage or a system of education. And astonishing indeed it is to behold the number of charitable, municipal, national undertakings, in which our representative Christian takes the lead. We do honour to his piety, but we demand that it occupy itself with the good, healthy, happy life of this terraqueous globe. We have very little respect for the solitary raptures of saints, looking upward into the skies, if nothing comes of it for this lower world. Such solitary raptures we rather excuse than admire. Vague exultations followed by vague depressions—we leave them undisturbed. But not to saintship of this description does England look for its salvation. By all means, let this or that gentle youth sit apart, with books of devotion on his knees—sit there in ecstatic, hopeful, amazed condition of mind—if such to him be the best and most innocent mode of passing his existence. Innocent it is, and therefore let it be undisturbed. But England thinks it has other

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employment for its youth, and looks for help *to* another species of piety.

VICAR.

Many a virtue is exclusively drawn from Christianity which owes its existence to the normal exercise of an advancing intellect. *That* I can understand. On the other side, do not let us make the mistake of attributing our virtues to an intelligent public opinion, without taking into consideration the special operation of Christianity upon that public opinion. There is very much in our morality that has no immediate connection with religion; but that moral opinion of the world with which it *is* connected, has grown up under the influence of religion.

A temperate man, who sets a right value on his health, and who is ashamed of the disgrace of inebriety; a humane man, who shrinks even from the spectacle of suffering; an honourable man, who would blush crimson-deep at the idea of uttering a premeditated lie,—these seem to need no form of religion to uphold their temperance, their humanity, their veracity; yet

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the public opinion in which these virtues grew up, would not have been precisely what it is *but* for the element of religion.

SANDFORD.

Granted.

VICAR.

I, for my part, would be the last to undervalue the union of a general intelligence with a Christian piety; nor has this been the tendency of the Protestant Church of England—not, at least, of the Church of England, as I was taught to know and revere it; not of the Church which acknowledged amongst its leading spirits such men as Locke and Paley and Butler. Our Church has not hitherto been ungenerous towards those of her own members whose learning may have appeared to lead them somewhat astray. When, after some time spent abroad, I returned to my own country, I congratulated it especially on the manner in which its ecclesiastical affairs were settled. We had a Church which did not affect to govern, but only to instruct the people; and which taught

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a piety that neither inflated with spiritual conceit, nor prostrated before the altar with a humility painful to witness. Is all this to change?

ADA.

Tell Mr Sandford some of your experiences while you were at Naples.

VICAR.

They illustrate nothing but what Mr Sandford, and, indeed, every intelligent person, knows very well; how readily an emotional piety may associate itself—with other things not quite so estimable.

I made a stay of some months in a small house in the neighbourhood of Naples. My domestics consisted of a valet, Lucchesi, and a cook, Teresa. Lucchesi I strongly suspected to be a rogue. I knew nothing of Teresa except that she was a bad cook, with a great reputation for sanctity.

I have a small silver crucifix which I value highly as a work of art. Lucchesi, too, had

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formed a high appreciation, probably of its mercantile value. I missed it; he told me a long story about thieves who were known to be prowling in the neighbourhood. I had my suspicions as to the manner in which it had disappeared.

I put no further questions to Lucchesi, but in the evening walked quietly down stairs, and looked in at the open door of the kitchen. The rogue was showing his booty to the old woman Teresa. The pious Teresa had fallen down upon her knees, alternately kissing the crucifix and congratulating her fellow-servant on his valuable prize. "All silver! — how heavy!" and then she again sobbed over the sacred image. The moment I entered the kitchen she thrust the crucifix into her bosom, and rose from her knees. I asked for my crucifix. She swore by all the saints in heaven she had never seen it!

SANDFORD.

How did it end?

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VICAR.

I told her that I had seen it in her hand the instant before, and hinted that if she restored it to me, Lucchesi should have no questions put to him, provided he would not bring it down again to assist her devotions. Lucchesi took the crucifix from the old woman, and returned it to me, protesting at the same time that I had very rightly interpreted his motives, for he had only brought it down to Teresa that she might for once say her prayers to it.

SANDFORD.

Strange! Yet perhaps in this more enlightened country there is many a man who kisses the crucifix to as little purpose as Teresa.

VICAR.

The same old woman gave me an opportunity of observing how easily miracles are multiplied in a Catholic country—in any country, in short, where a belief in miracles already prevails.

She kept a pig; kept it in a sort of scullery which communicated with the kitchen. Of the

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existence of this inmate of our establishment I knew nothing till I heard that it was lost. The pig had strayed. Then I heard of prayers and wax-tapers offered to St Anthony for its restoration.

Late one evening, after Teresa had gone to bed, she heard the handle of the scullery-door slowly turn. Starting from her couch, she saw the door open of itself—saw the pig enter—saw the door slowly close again. It was, of course, St Anthony himself who had brought back the pig.

It so happened that, walking out that night, as I often did in the balmy nights of Italy, I observed a pig standing at what I at once surmised to be its old familiar domicile. I turned the handle of the door, and let the creature in. It was in vain that I gave Teresa this explanation. Nothing could shake her faith in the miracle. Her own account of the matter was, that the Devil had put it into the heart of her heretic master to give this wicked explanation, in order that her faith in St Anthony might be tried!

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Let me add, that I lived long enough in the south of Italy to understand that, amidst all its superstition, and trickery, and self-delusion, there steals in an influence from the imitation of the Christian character — there steals in a ray of light from that fixed luminary in the past ages—which is most precious, and which introduces itself, I suppose, in the only way in which (without altering the nature of humanity) it *could* be introduced. At least, I felt that my more rational Protestantism, with its doctrinal system, would not assimilate *with* this people as they now present themselves to our contemplation.

SANDFORD.

The teaching that is to affect a people must in some measure grow out of the people themselves—grow, of course, out of the better and abler minds of that people. If a new element is introduced *from without*, it must be such as at once assimilates with the people, or the people must modify it till it does. There is no help for this.

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CONVERSATION VI.

THE WHOLE IS ONE.

MANSFIELD—ADA—SANDFORD.

I HAVE to report the last of our conversations that had a distinct reference to this great theme of good and evil. In this last we travelled over so wide a field—starting from our primary conceptions of Substance, Power, and Relation, and ending in some attempt to see the whole of this progressive scheme of Nature and Humanity as the manifestation of the Divine Idea—we travelled, I say, over so wide a circuit, that if we did not exhaust our topic, we appeared, at least, to have exhausted ourselves. After this "field-day" we did not again for some weeks refer to these philosophical subjects.

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About this time, too, the great political events which made the talk of all Europe,—first, the partial liberation of Italy by the arms of France, and next, the division (not to be accomplished, it seems, without war) of the great federal republic of America,—became also the engrossing topics of our little coterie at Gravenhurst.

I am aware that certain subjects of an abstract nature are introduced here with a brevity which may render the dialogue, in some parts, rather obscure to those who are not familiar with such subjects. I do not apologise for this brevity, because it is the fault which of all others will be most readily forgiven; but I crave some indulgence, and that it be borne in mind that, even if I had reported this conversation at greater length, or had accompanied it by explanatory notes, I must still have taxed the attention of the reader.

We were assembled, as before, in the General's library. Ada, turning to me, said, "You have lately, more than once, used the expression, 'the whole is one!' Will you explain

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to me the precise sense in which you use it? Do you mean that one Substance or Being underlies and causes the whole phenomena of the universe? Or do you simply mean that the whole is one scheme or plan—the various substances and their various properties being bound together by such relations as to form one great design—one great scheme, whose purpose, let us say, is the development of man?

SANDFORD.

The last is the only sense in which I have ventured to use the expression. It was the only sense in which it was necessary to use it. We have been often skirmishing round the old problem of the origin, or the *rationale*, of evil, and in connection with this subject I naturally referred to the unity of our great mundane scheme. For the only answer I can give to the old question, Why evil exists? is, that good and evil together form one entire scheme—that the whole is one, and that the whole is good. It is an answer almost as old, perhaps, as the question itself, but it is an

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answer which becomes more clear and satisfactory as science enables us to trace the connection between all parts of this wondrous whole.

Modern science, and our later place in history, have taught us that this great scheme of nature and of man is *progressive.* They have taught us, moreover, that there is the same intimate or *causal* connection between events when they are of this progressive character as when they are periodical or cyclical. They have, therefore, enlarged our conceptions of that great whole which (conceived as the wisdom of God) is the final resting-place of the human intellect.

ADA.

I just now spoke of the purpose of our world; but I am not sure how far we can correctly speak of a purpose of the whole.

SANDFORD.

We can, of course, mean only that one part is subordinate to another. Inanimate nature,

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for instance, is subordinate to the animated. We could conceive of the solid earth rolling in space without any four-footed creature walking upon it; but the four-footed creature would be sadly at a loss without the solid earth. Nerve and artery can perform their functions well enough without our philosophical speculations; but speculative philosophers require a nervous and arterial system. The sun in heaven could do very well without us; we could not dispense with the sun. The highest thought of man cannot influence a single movement that the astronomer has to deal with; but the facts which constitute the science of astronomy have had much to do with the development of the human mind. As we rise, in this manner, higher and higher, it is the last which throws back new meaning upon the whole; we naturally call it the purpose of the rest.

ADA.

That which is highest is most dependent. It is no great boast that the sun makes,—that he can do without us; we not without him.

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SANDFORD.

In this point of view we may correctly say that man, or rather the full development of man, whatever that may ultimately be, is the purpose of our great scheme. Some would prefer to say that the happiness of all living creatures is that purpose. It would be idle to seek in every part of nature, animate as well as inanimate, a direct reference to the convenience of mankind; and the pleasure of the simplest creature has in it the character of an ultimate end. But, if it were only for the sake of brevity, I think we may be permitted to say that this progressive and Heaven-directed man, so immeasurably superior to all other terrestrial creatures, is the world's great purpose —that which gives significance and a reason to the whole.

ADA.

But if the unity of plan suffice for your argument, you have come to some conclusion— you who occupy yourself so much with metaphysical inquiries—upon that other unity, the unity of being.

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SANDFORD.

I have always spoken of mind and matter as different substances, distinguished by their different properties. But, I suppose, you ask whether I should finally resolve both substances into one—or into manifestations of the one Absolute Being.

Like many others, I have felt the attraction of such subjects; I cannot say that I have ever rested in any quite satisfactory conclusion. Still, I must suppose that both mind and matter are, *in some sense,* the products of the one Eternal Being.

ADA.

A power which posits in space some apparently independent *thing*, and throws off what becomes an individual, separate *self*——

SANDFORD.

Is to us altogether incomprehensible. But so is all power incomprehensible: we have but to say that *it is.* The power which one atom exercises over another, or seems to exercise, is

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one of those primary facts of which nothing can be said, than that *it is.* We have the idea of power, as we have the idea of substance, but all *instances* of it are alike startling to the reflective mind.

ADA.

You hold, then, to the unity of being as well as to the unity of plan.

SANDFORD.

One is oppressed by the magnitude and subtilty of these *ontological* problems, as they are sometimes called — problems which carry us out of the sphere of our sense-given world, and belong as much to theology as to metaphysics.

I have rested in that view which seemed to me to combine the greater number of generally admitted truths, and which combined them in the most harmonious manner. I have never felt that I had attained a position free from all difficulty. A transcendent intellect, indeed, must that man have—or a most confident temper—who, after he has formed his philosophical system, can look at it without one feeling of

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distrust, without a secret suspicion that there may be some vulnerable point, some "undipped heel," upon which another hand, or his own hand at another time, may inflict a fatal wound.

MANSFIELD.

Happily the confident temper is not very rare, whatever may be said of the transcendent intellect. Thus some philosophical faith is secured amongst us. Sometimes the two unite in one man, and then we have the master by whom thousands can swear.

ADA.

But what is that view in which you have rested?

SANDFORD.

It is the opinion of many profound thinkers, that there can be but one real, self-existent Being in the universe. They regard created or *phenomenal* substance as necessarily some manifestation of the power of that Being. In this manner they partly escape the perplexity that surrounds the creation of matter. Nor

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have they found that this belief in the one Being leads them to Pantheism, or such form of Pantheism as hides the Creator in the creation itself. Although all our creation is but the power or being of God, yet that power is not absorbed in all that is created. For not only all that now exists is presumed to be some manifestation of the power of God, but in Him, past, present, and future, must also be presumed to exist in what we can only describe as thought or idea. In Him the wisdom as well as the power of the whole resides; His the reason and benevolence of the universe.

In some such view as this I, too, would rest.

ADA.

But by what steps do you arrive at it? I ask the rather because I have observed—you will pardon me a criticism—a certain inconsistency in the manner in which you speak of material substance and material forces. Sometimes you speak of this matter around us, and of which we ourselves are half composed, as if it were a positive reality; you are impa-

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tient with those who describe the real material substance, as something *standing under* the extended thing; I have heard you jestingly exclaim, "I stand up for the atom!" Yet, at other times, you speak of extended substance (you do so at this present moment), as if it might be resolved itself into a manifestation of power.

SANDFORD.

That apparent inconsistency admits of easy explanation.

If our senses give us any idea of substance at all (which it is presumed they do), the extended thing itself, or the atom of the scientific man, *is* that substance. If, therefore, I speak of matter as substance, it is not an imaginary entity (neither God nor the atom), underlying extension, that I mean, but the extended thing itself, as given me by the senses. In this point of view I have said, in not very philosophical style, "I stand up for the atom!" I say that, confining ourselves to this mundane system, it is our only conception of substance; and that what the metaphysician attempts to insert

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under extension, is either *another extension,* or resolves itself into a power exerted *by nothing.*

But I am ready to admit that the substance given us by the senses, affords no satisfactory resting-place to the speculative mind. And when I find that both the powers and relations, attributed, in the first place, to material substances, point to a supernatural origin, and give to me a Being that combines the attributes both of mind and matter—*then* I feel myself at liberty to carry my analysis a step further, and to resolve the atom also into some form of power of the one self-existent.

ADA.

Your atoms, therefore, after having given us the ideas of substance, and power, and of relation, transfer all three to the supernatural being, God.

SANDFORD.

Such is the course of thought which it seems to me the mind takes, or may take.

Substance, power, and relation are given us at once by the senses—that is, of course, by the

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judgment as called forth by the senses. I cannot think of substance without power, nor of power without those relations between substances on which the exercise of all material power depends. Substance, power, and relation form a triad which is present in every single thing. For, take the single atom, and you find that in your conception of it all three are combined. There is power, for it resists; there is relation, for what is resistance but a relation? there is substance, for in every relation there must be something to be related, and in every power something that exerts it. Although I can speak separately of these three great ideas or facts, and reason on them with some sort of distinctness, yet in every conception given to me by the senses they are indissolubly combined. My substance is always power as well as substance; my individual thing is always defined by its relations to other things.

MANSFIELD.

You and Ada are breathing very thin air at

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present. I am not active enough this evening to climb to your altitudes. Excuse me if I drop the silk handkerchief over my eyes, and doze before the firelight, till you descend to some lower level.

ADA.

The silk handkerchief, uncle, by all means. But I know you will not sleep; you will hear every word we say, and perhaps break out upon us when we are most beset by difficulties.

Let me first ask of you, Mr Sandford—limiting yourself for the moment to material nature—to explain to me this triad of Substance, Power, and Relation.

I have just come from the perusal of Dr Brown's 'Essay on Cause and Effect,' and from some still later authorities on these subjects: I find that, according to them, the idea of Power is *not* given us by material objects—that the idea, in fact, is altogether resolvable into that of invariable succession.

Again, the same class of philosophers gene-

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rally agree that extension is a property—which means a power; and that our material substance is that entity which possesses the property, or puts forth the power, of extension.

Thus the idea of power is denied to me, and yet the material substance is explained as the power of extension or resistance put forth by a concealed entity. I know not how to reconcile these statements, which, nevertheless, are sometimes found within the covers of the same book. I sadly want enlightenment on these ideas of substance and power.

SANDFORD.

And I too, I assure you.

But so far as I see my way, I certainly find that the ideas both of substance and of power are revealed to us in the external world. I have already said that I do not think the mind is satisfied with leaving them there.

Extension is, indeed, a property, inasmuch as it is one with resistance. But how conceive of this relation of resistance without the conception at the same instant of two *resistants?*

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All our knowledge, it is said, is relative; but if so, the relative implies the positive, or rather implies two positives, which are related together.

The two positives that resist are represented to us inevitably as *two resisting things.* To say that there is the relation of resistance, and to say that there two *resistants,* is to express the same fact in different words. We call resistance by the name of extension, when we think separately of the resistants; we call extension by the name of resistance, when we think of the relation between them.

The metaphysician finds that the positive substance thus brought before him has been defined or revealed by its relation to some other substance. *But he can define it in no other way.* The two extended things that have risen together into his knowledge, by means of their relationship, *are* his substance. At this stage of his knowledge he can have no other. If he calls extension a power or property only, to what substance is he to assign this property?

I know that this state of things, however

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satisfactory to ordinary men, is not so to the metaphysician; he is discontented with a conception which seems at once both power and substance; and we have seen that he attempts to rise above it. I simply assert that, resting in our mundane system, the extended atom is our material substance.

ADA.

Let us grant the atom for the present, and proceed to the question of power. Perhaps, too, we can go back with advantage to the discussion of substance, after having established distinctly our idea of power.

SANDFORD.

Very true. And if any of these scholastic subtleties are of much importance to the world at large, it is, above all, necessary to vindicate our right to the idea of power.

ADA.

"Power," says Dr Brown, "is the uniform relation of antecedence and sequence, and

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nothing more." Nor does he allow that we gather any other idea of power from the operations of our own mind. We have no other idea of power to carry upwards with us into theology.

You know his line of argument, with which I find other and later authorities of great repute amongst us substantially agree: may I state it to you, for the sake of clearing my own thoughts?

If we see two events, one following the other, we remember them in that succession, or we associate them together in that order. There is no necessity even to call in the aid of long habit; one instance may be sufficient to establish this link of association. It is simply an affair of memory: one of these events is seen, and the other is immediately expected.

But events, so far as they strike our senses, do not all follow in a uniform succession. Some do, and some do not. We contrast these two classes of events; we call the last accidental, we give the title of *cause and effect* to the former.

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SANDFORD.

You are proceeding, I observe, very cautiously.

ADA.

It is common to say that the uniformity of succession which distinguishes one of these classes depends on *the nature of the things*—on certain powers, properties, potentialities they possess. It is "the nature of the thing" to act so and so—it has such a "*power.*" Dr Brown contends that all such phrases merely express the one fact that, our *antecedents* being present, our observed *consequents* will follow. They express nothing but this association we have formed. Events and their order are all the knowledge we have. We cannot explain that order by appealing to the nature or power of the thing; for *the nature or power of the thing*, when analysed, is but a knowledge of this order.

I have, for instance, two balls before me; an India-rubber ball, and one of moist clay. My senses have already made me aware of certain differences between them. I throw one

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of these balls down upon the floor, and it rebounds; I throw the other on the same floor, and it adheres. I associate these different results with the differences already observed between the two balls. Whenever I see balls again resembling these, I expect the same differences in their behaviour. This is the whole amount of my knowledge. I give the name elasticity to the property or power of rebounding; but what do I express by this property or power but the simple fact that one ball rebounds, while another ball does not? If I attempt to explain the different results by saying that it is the nature of one ball to act in one manner, and the nature of the other ball to act in another manner, I am only, under the disguise of different modes of expression, giving my own experience as an explanation of that experience. If I should further say that elasticity is due to a certain arrangement of the particles of which the rebounding ball is composed, I should still have only to associate the rebound with this arrangement of the particles—I am still as far as ever from any other conception of power;

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which is, indeed, but a convenient name for that invariable succession on which all our knowledge, practical as well as scientific, depends.

The reasoning appears correct, and yet, to my mind, it fails to carry conviction. Is there any covert sophistry in it? or must I, admitting its accuracy, have recourse (in order to retain my old original idea of power) to some transcendental or *a priori* faith of the Reason —of a Reason which is defiant of experience, or of the Understanding judging according to sense?

SANDFORD.

I hope not. Philosophers *may* be justified in introducing higher or other sources of knowledge than experience, or the judgments founded on experience; but the first condition they are bound to observe is, that they bring no conflict between the faculties of the human mind, otherwise all test of truth is gone, for the harmony of our ideas is the ultimate test of truth. We should simply divide men into partisans of the Reason and partisans of the

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Understanding, and these two sections would have no common ground of argument.

I prefer, in this case, to look steadily at the objective realities about us, and the kind of judgments which all men agree we inevitably form.

I find something more than the relation of succession. Take your illustration of the two balls. If two balls, already recognised as different, are brought alternately into relationship with the same floor, and behave differently, I must associate this difference of behaviour with the differences between the two balls; and although this association is coupled with one of succession, or order in time, it is something more—it is a direct association between the *difference* in the two balls, and the *difference* of the event.

But it so happens that where modern science teaches us to look for this exercise of power, there is no succession of events, but two synchronous events. In the case of two mutually attracting or mutually repelling particles, there is nothing left for the mind to seize hold

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of *but* some relation between the particles themselves. Our idea of power, therefore, whatever else may become of it, cannot here be resolved into the uniform relation of antecedence and sequence.

All the phenomena of non-sensitive matter have been resolved into various kinds of attraction, and repulsion (and polarity, which is a form of attraction or repulsion). Whether this great generalisation be correct or not, does not concern us, if only it is admitted that mutual attraction and repulsion are prevailing forms of the activity of matter. Now, if two particles mutually attract each other, we have two synchronous events—we have two particles starting at once towards each other. What is it we have here, if not some relation between the particles themselves?

ADA.

May it not be said that the only result of this introduction of the two synchronous events is somewhat to modify the language of Dr Brown? We have but to say that two par-

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ticles of matter being placed in a given position, these *two events* follow.

SANDFORD.

That would give us a definite fixed *position* as the cause, or invariable antecedent, of *change of position;* which would hardly do; and the chemist would exclaim that the same position in space is followed by very different results, according to the difference of the particles.

Here is an elementary book of chemistry lying open before us. Take the first experiment detailed in it. "Immerse," says the book, "a piece of iron in a solution of copper, and a deposit of copper takes place on the iron. For every particle of copper deposited on the iron, an equivalent part of iron left its place." It seems, then, that amongst the molecules of the metal and of the solution there was set up this twofold action, or these two synchronous movements. Neither movement can be said to be the cause (or the antecedent) of the other. The only antecedent Dr Brown could supply us

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with is that of position. But if the vessel here were filled with another solution, there would be the same position, yet not these movements. How avoid the inference that the difference of the result is due to the difference of the particles themselves? The power of the particles, their activity, and their action upon each other, may be very obscure ideas, but they obstinately resist all analysis.

ADA.

But still we can form no idea of the acting of one particle on another—how it draws it to itself. Whatever chemical elements are employed, we can only say *those* elements in that position move together. How suppose one particle acting on another through empty space? And then, both particles must act *before* they move. They must have that power which Aristotle, I am told, ascribed to God, of causing motion without Himself moving. For the movement of each particle depends on the *presence* of the other, not on the *movement* of the other.

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SANDFORD.

Whether we are to conceive one particle acting upon another (and so each particle *inert* so far as it is acted on, and *active* so far as it acts on another), or whether we are to drop the idea of inertness or passivity, and to conceive a general activity of the particles of matter which "move together, if they move at all," I leave to others to determine. All I am concerned to maintain is, that external nature gives us this idea of power. What is this activity everywhere around us but power? What (as I read it) is the influence which matter exerts on matter, in controlling or initiating this activity, but power?

It is quite a mistake to ask *how* matter attracts or repels, if attraction and repulsion are the simplest forms of material activity. Suppose we conjured up some ether between the two particles, we should have the same perplexity transferred to the particles of this ether. When we are compelled to say there is a direct relation between particles themselves determining their activity, we must

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describe this as a relation of power. Whether the power ultimately belongs to the particles themselves, is another question.

ADA.

There is a point of view you have not discussed. Some derive our idea of power from the consciousness of our own activity, and assert that we do but transfer, in a metaphorical manner, our own sense of power to inanimate things.

SANDFORD.

It is a common trick of the imagination to infuse our human feelings into inanimate nature, and something of the kind takes place here. But that which we call *sense of effort*, or consciousness of power, is made up partly of certain muscular sensations peculiar to the sentient being, and partly of the very idea of power we are canvassing. The *resistance* which another thing offers to me, and the knowledge that the movement of my arm overcomes that resistance, give together their meaning and

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significance to certain sensations which accompany that movement. I press my hand upon this flexible cane; it bends, and it returns my pressure. I recognise the antagonist force in the cane quite as distinctly as I recognise my muscular force; and unless I choose to play with my imagination, I do not infuse any degree of consciousness into the cane.

ADA.

Scientific men write freely enough of *force*, which, I presume, differs only from the metaphysician's *power* in this, that it is limited to the power of material objects.

SANDFORD.

Some scientific men have a manner of speaking of force as if they meant by it a separate *entity*, which moved an inert matter. But the greater number, I believe, would agree in defining it as the activity of matter itself, and the influence of matter on matter (if these two are separable).

You said that we should obtain a clearer

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idea of the atom when we had defined our notion of power or force. And it is certain that the conceptions which science teaches us to form, favour the reality of the atom. Attraction and repulsion necessarily suggest the idea that they are the properties of some *unit.*

The old puzzle of the infinite divisibility of matter threatened to annihilate our atom (though the answer was always open, that the ability to conceive division was not tantamount to the actual possibility of division); but now it may be argued that, if in practice we never reach to the ultimate units, yet in every conception of a solid we imply their existence. For every perceptible solid is formed by the attraction of cohesion, and this attraction must be supposed to be exerted by some unit.*

ADA.

I should have many more questions to ask

* These subtleties about matter and force, and, indeed, many other subtle questions, have been lately discussed in a very masterly manner by Mr Herbert Spencer in his 'First Principles,' a work now in course of publication.

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both about substance and power, but I wish you to complete the account of your Triad by saying something of Relation.

SANDFORD.

The fundamental fact to be noticed here is, that we must start with certain established relations or "co-existences," without which our substances and powers avail nothing, or form mere chaos, if chaos is an intelligible conception. These primary relations, from which others are evolved, cannot be due to the atoms themselves, nor to their forces, because the forces we see exercised depend on *them*. Such forces, in their exercise, may produce new relations; but go back as far as we will in imagination, we have established relations or "co-existences" as a fundamental fact—as much so as the existence of substances and their powers.

Now, of these relations we might be content to say that *they are*, just as we might be content to say of substance and power, *they are;* and we might accept our triad as our final conception, dim and confused as it, in some

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respects, appears; *if* it were not for the necessity we lie under of connecting the primary co-existences, whatever they may have been, with all the relations that have followed, or will follow. This inclusion of a *future* in a *present* can be conceived by us only as an idea or thought.

ADA.

Is not this substantially the argument from design?

SANDFORD.

Yes. The argument from design may be stated in a manner to render it distasteful to a philosophic mind. But if we attempt to embrace the whole as it develops in time—if we take notice that the earliest co-existences in which our planetary system commenced, have a clear connection with the latest developments of the human species—if we look at past, present, and future *as one*,—I am unable to perceive how we can represent this whole (inaugurated from the very commencement) except as an idea or thought:—which thought implies an answerable *Being*.

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ADA.

I perceive your drift. Having referred the primary *Relations*, one member of your triad, to this Intellectual Being—those mysterious *powers* which were attributed to matter, and which are inextricably complicated with relations, find a Being to whom they can be more fitly assigned; and that material *substance*, which always had an ambiguous air, can now be permitted to surrender its assumed character of self-existence. Our triad resolves itself into a realised idea: into the power and wisdom of God. There is One Being, whose power and wisdom manifest themselves in what we call creation.

MANSFIELD (*throwing off the silk handkerchief*).

Oh, what avails all this subtlety! Not one step nearer does it carry us to the utterly inexplicable, which, at the same time, is the altogether unquestionable. "Created substance" is not a jot more perplexing than such "manifestation of power" as is tantamount to created substance.

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On the one hand, we have our material world, inhabited by living, thinking beings.

On the other hand, we are irresistibly led to the conception of an eternal Reason, and absolute Power, as author of all this world.

But no wit of man can think a passage back from one to the other. We travel from the world to God; we cannot retrace our steps, and travel back from God to the world. And what wonder? It is not a *man* whom we have projected into eternity. It is a Being framed, in our conception, by *contrast* as well as *similarity*. The Fluctuating has suggested the Permanent; the Relative, the Absolute. We accept these great ideas, but we can make no use of them in the way of reasoning; we can use them only for worship—which is perhaps the greatest of all utilities. We cannot trace our way back from the Permanent to the Fluctuating, from the Absolute to the Relative, from the One to the Many.

Let us believe frankly and entirely in our own world of matter and spirit—perhaps of many kinds of matter and of spirit. What if

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there be fifty or five hundred substances? the great unity of design or plan is still the only unity that concerns us. We *are*, and this world *is*, and there is a great God above. I believe in nature, man, and God; but the highest of these alone knows the mysterious bond that makes the three to be one.

Discourse to us, Sandford, of this unity of plan, so far at least as humanity is concerned in it; for no one disputes the harmony of the inanimate creation. "There is no devil," as I have heard you say, "in a Bridgewater Treatise." It is only in ourselves, in our own antagonistic elements of good and evil, that we find discord and confusion. Trace for us how the passions of Love and Hate, of Hope and Fear, bind men together, and stir them to action, and lead to laws and government, morality and religion. Show us how knowledge grows by very means of error. Convince us that there is a law of development in the human species which we have only to comprehend in order to admire.

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ADA.

But before either of you launch upon this more open sea, explain to me this: We talk of the immutability of the laws of nature, and, in the same breath, we talk of progress and development; how are these to be reconciled?

SANDFORD.

I should be very slow to use the expression "immutability" of the laws of nature, recognising, as I do, an Author of those laws. But there is no inconsistency between immutable or constant laws and progressive development, if we understand by laws the properties or powers with which substances are endowed. New relations may be brought about between those substances by the very operation of their powers, and those new relations may give new scope to those powers, developing what had been hitherto, to us, potentialities only. If, from the action of a volcano, or even of a mountain-stream, some new material is spread over the surface of the valley, new chemical

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combinations will take place, and yet no one would say that a new chemistry was created. At the bottom of the sea innumerable small shells are deposited, which, by some change in the bed of the ocean, become afterwards a portion of the dry land. Such events probably influence the growth of plants; yet we should not say that any new law of growth had been introduced. We see by such instances, that science does not enable us to predict progress; but when any progress has been made, we can observe that it was in strict accordance with established laws. And so it is with human history: we cannot here predict the future, because man is progressive, and some new exercise of his old powers is constantly occurring; but when the novelty has occurred, and we look back upon the past, we trace, or attempt to trace, a scientific connection between all the events; we find that all is due to the powers of man and nature, and the relations originally established between them.

But I do not pretend to say that all progress in creation follows this type. New properties

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themselves may be introduced. The laws of human psychology must have come in with man.

MANSFIELD.

Our scientific people—forgive my presumption for saying so—talk a great deal of nonsense on this same topic of Force. A very able man writes a treatise on the 'Correlation of Forces,' and forthwith there are I know not how many parodies upon it. One writes that, if he waves his hand in the air, he is author of a movement that gives rise to another movement, and that to another in eternal succession. The vibrations in the air have become vibrations of heat in the chairs and tables about him—have become electrical movements in the earth, in the clouds—and so on eternally. I suppose he is not the only man who waves his hand in the air, and the vibration he sets up may somewhere encounter other vibrations, and become neutralised. If there are incessant disturbances of equilibrium, there are also incessant restorations of equilibrium. Another—altogether adverse to this indefinite multiplication of movements—pro-

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claims that there is always exactly the same amount of force in the world. What can he mean? Every increase in the population of England, every additional mill built in Lancashire, is a palpable contradiction to his theory. Whole regions in America and Australia have been peopled, stocked, planted, cultivated: has all this added nothing to the sum of existing forces?

SANDFORD.

The supposition is that every force is the equivalent of some preceding force, and this suggests the idea of the same amount of force being, as it were, in perpetual circulation. But the doctrine (even if it were established) of equivalents of force, does not lead to this conclusion; because the operation of these forces may produce new arrangements of matter, owing to which *a greater number of these equivalents* may be introduced within the circle. Every relation of co-existence is brought about by some preceding force, but the next force to be displayed seems to depend upon this relation. Thus change and augmentation are con-

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sistent with the idea of the fixed properties of matter; or, in other words, do not require us to conceive of any break in what we call the chain of cause and effect.

MANSFIELD.

Then another in high fantastic strain tells me that the heat which burning coal generates is the *conserved force* of the sun as he shone millions of ages ago; and talks to me of force as if it were something bottled up in a cellarage. The vegetation of which the coal is composed grew, of course, under the influence of the sun, but these present particles of burning coal act as much *by their own inherent properties* as the sun itself. Given the requisite relation, and surely the force is always forthcoming.

It seems to be the tendency of modern speculation to regard the world—or say our planetary system—as containing within itself, from the commencement, the requisite powers for *all* the developments that have ensued. I find more difficulty in seizing upon this idea than

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upon the older conception of successive actions of creative power.

SANDFORD.

The last seems the more facile conception. The truth, which to me appears as grand as it is simple and conspicuous, is this,—that, look when and where we will, there is an organised whole, and that the development which takes place is such that the past prepares the present, and the present the future.

Thus, whichever of these conceptions we adopt, the evolutions in time can present themselves to us only as *an Idea.*

Let me add that we, in our brief historic period, are unable to point to any event which does not seem the result of the powers with which nature and man have been endowed.

MANSFIELD.

In that I should agree with you. I cannot make man out of the monkey, nor the monkey out of the monad. But one generation of men grows out of another. And each generation,

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in some respect, improves upon, or changes from its predecessor *even in the act of living;* for the mind of man is in its nature inventive, and builds thought on thought, and deed on deed.

We cannot tell where or when one thought will lead to another, or what the new thought will effect. But we know that all our thinking is according to psychological laws, and that the results of our thinking will again become conditions of still further thought.

When we speak of science in reference to human beings, very many people imagine that we want to degrade human beings into mere machines. The properties of a man and the properties of a steam-engine are something very different. There are other laws than the laws of inanimate things. Our men and women are not like the figures of a Dutch clock, moved by the mechanism of the clock itself: they are living creatures, having within themselves their own powers of movement; which, however, to carry out our metaphor, are not without necessary relations to the mechanism below.

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ADA.

Our progress in knowledge most men seem willing to look upon as a proper subject for scientific investigation. An Aristotle and a Newton think, as you say, according to the same psychological laws as the simplest of those who benefit by their teaching. All the knowledge of a Greek could not have taught him to predict an Aristotle, but we who study an Aristotle know that he could have appeared only in Greece, only when and where he did. What physical science will do for us in the future, no one can foretell; but no one doubts that the passage from the known to the unknown will be effected by the same intellectual action as heretofore.

The intellect—if we have skill enough for the task—lies open to scientific investigation; but the *will?*—is there not something here which, from its very nature, refuses to enter into our scientific survey, even when we are limiting ourselves to the past?

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SANDFORD.

Yet it is precisely an act of the intellect which constitutes that *free-will*, or choice, about which so much difficulty is raised.

I cannot tell how a man will act—I cannot tell how a man will think; but if I can say that the powers and previous knowledge of the man determine his thought, I must say the same of his actions, wherever they are the results of free-will or deliberate choice.

MANSFIELD.

We cannot often predict what, under novel circumstances, we ourselves will do. But the persuasion is universal, when we look back upon our deeds, that if the same circumstances *could* return to us, and find us *exactly* in the same mood, with *exactly* the same knowledge, we should do the same deed again. But, in general, when we look back, we mix our present knowledge with our past, and think how we should act if the same circumstances and our present knowledge could be brought together.

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But analyse or describe the will how we please, nothing is more plain than the grand harmony that exists between the living creature and the inanimate world on which he moves hither and thither, with sense of power and faculty of choice.

We can contemplate the spectacle, free from all embarrassment, when we limit ourselves to the lower animals. What a scene lies open before us! what multiplied *individualities!* and all finding scope for their impulses.

Here, too, we can look with philosophic tranquillity on pain as well as pleasure, and on all kinds of passion. See how the search for food—how the art or the strife to obtain it—how the combat and the assassination—fill the whole arena of animal existence with movement, and intensest feeling, and pride, and energy. Repose, too, is not wanting. Whole herds graze peacefully—or not more startled by apprehension of danger than is necessary to call forth the quick eye, the quick ear, and to make them enjoy, by contrast, their peaceful feeding.

I like to bring before me the life, say of our

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crafty fox. What conscious activity—what a compact individuality—what persistence—what purpose! For, indeed, our fox is not without a purpose, and a certain judgment of means to end. There is booty near at hand, but countrymen will tell you that an old fox prefers to invade the more distant hen-roost. Suspicion is less likely to fall upon him. In him, not encumbered by moral considerations, you cannot but admire the address and sagacity that he brings to bear upon this grand question of supply of food, and generally upon his own self-preservation.

I grant you that to some dainty hen, snatched from her perch, and carried off to black night and Erebus, the conduct of the fox must appear simply diabolic. We—unless, indeed, the hen should be our own private property—willingly sacrifice her to the general energies of the animal kingdom.

ADA.

But, as you say, the fox has no morality. It costs me an effort—but I can make the effort—to look upon such acts of assassination as parts

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of a beneficent scheme. But the human assassination!

MANSFIELD.

You see we have a horror of it. We make laws against it; we rise, banded together by our human sympathies, against the assassin.

The combat, the violent death, and possessions snatched from us by brute force—you see they have awakened in man forethought, and laws, and polity, and moral obligations. But man, you say, is endowed with reason. Why did not his reason at once prevent the incursion into human life of these brute actions? Look closer at what you mean by reason. It is a faculty which must have its due objects on which it is to be exercised, and by which it must be developed. The human reason we are conscious of, could not have been developed without aid of those materials that our life holds in common with the animal. We rise, we take our first step upward, by putting our foot upon the brute within us.

How like a dream reads the history of man! Priests, kings, conquests, factions — what an

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embroglio it all seems! Yet historians are, every year, with more and more distinctness, showing that there was some method in all this apparent madness.

Society grows its heroes, and then worships them, and strange are the heroes it sometimes has need of. The good and the true that were in them, were mingled with wild errors and fantastic sentiments. Such combinations were precisely what the world, at that age, produced, and what the world, at that age, wanted.

SANDFORD.

A large portion of the history of mankind would be written by one who should faithfully describe our various kinds of heroes or progressive men.

Sometimes the political or religious hero of the day is little more than the flag or standard which the crowd carry before them. They need this symbol for their own organisation.

He who perhaps originated the movement was a solitary thinker who lived and died in oblivion. Perhaps many of such thinkers lived

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and wrought, knowing nothing of the precise influence they would ultimately exercise.

A third class both rouse the strife and head the combatants.

ADA.

The greatest of men seem to be matured in solitude. There alone those thoughts could expand and freely shape themselves, which they had, indeed, carried with them, into the desert, out of some contemporary society.

SANDFORD.

The prophet is such solitary thinker, taken, him and his dream together, out of his solitude, and placed at the head of multitudes. He half dreams still. The wisest of mankind, he is still half blinded by the vision of his solitude. He is a ruler one moment, perhaps a martyr the next.

Men have lived whose voice has been heard from age to age, and has spread from nation to nation.

MANSFIELD.

And your voice and mine will hardly extend

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to our next door neighbour, and will not influence him. No wonder that some men are as gods to us.

SANDFORD.

Not only have such men animated a whole people with one spirit, but they have united nation to nation in some kind of brotherhood. Only through the Heaven-descended does the morality of the wise rule over the less wise. And no nation has ever received the higher morality of another nation, except through one who became the prophet of both.

MANSFIELD.

Study history free from the spirit of the satirist and the supernaturalist, and how grand a subject it becomes! The history of all nations should, if possible, be read together; they throw light on each other, and on our common humanity. Nor should a study of the individual consciousness, and the laws of thought and passion, be neglected. For we must recognise in ourselves some germ—some trace of all we read of—or we shall not under-

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stand it. In the study of history, our own little individuality spreads, divides, exalts itself, till it fills the whole earth, sits on every throne, and kneels at every shrine.

SANDFORD.

You said a moment ago—jestingly, of course—Discourse to us of this, of that; but what volumes must be filled by one who should attempt to trace the development of humanity—trace how truth through error, how virtue through crime, have been struggling into light. One thing we may say, that sufficient of the drama of life has been revealed, to justify us in favourable predictions of the future of humanity. Nor can we help looking at the past—not only by the light of the present, but by the light of these predictions.

For me, I feel that I have no standing-place unless I have a right to assert that the purposes of God are benevolent for man, and that these benevolent purposes have been unfolding through the course of ages—that while no generation has been forgotten or uncared for,

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yet that generations wiser and happier are to follow.

I rest in this relation of Creature to a Benevolent Creator.

Humanity reveals enough of joy and of goodness to give me faith in God; and this faith in God reacts upon my hopes of Humanity.

ADA.

Mr Sandford tells us that evil is necessary to good, but he tells us that evil diminishes with our progress; in some cases, I suppose, we learn to do without it, as, for instance, jails may be dispensed with when men have learned, in part by the instrumentality of jails, to respect each other's property; and in other cases the evil may modify its nature. But evil of some kind there must always be. Is it to be always diminishing? If so, we have something like the problem of the infinite divisibility of matter before us—we have an infinite divisibility of evil. Are we to arrive at some stationary state? But we are often told that a condition not progressive is sure to be retrograde. Must we go

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back to the notion of the antique world and say, that when the limit of possible perfection is attained, there comes an end of some kind— and a new commencement?

SANDFORD.

Ends and commencements are not within the scope of human science. We can never tell what was the lowest stage in which man has existed, or whether all the races of men have started from the same point. Still less can we tell what will be the last and complete development of man. These are questions for which, certainly, I have no answer.

But I think it very important to get together what plain truths we can on the subject of good and evil. If they do not shed their light far down the vista of the past, or far into the vista of the future, they will at least shield us from some hurtful errors, and perhaps from some unhappy superstitions.

I think it well to see that it is by overcoming evil, as well moral evil as natural evil, that we rise in the scale of creation. This very

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fact convinces us that evil was not brought here otherwise than beneficently—is, in fact, part of the scheme of a benevolent Creator. This may aid us, too, in supporting manfully the unavoidable, and in combating manfully all remediable evils. He who seeks truth and loves goodness has God upon his side.

I think it well to see that the *higher* needed the *lower*, that we may learn to respect the whole of our humanity. Even that which we have learnt to dispense with may have been a necessary help to our present elevation. I think it well to see that Human Society becomes the mould for the individual men born into it, and to see, also, how this mould itself becomes improved by those stronger minds which can advance upon the education they have received. Such truths as these enlighten each man on the debt, and on the duty, he owes to society. They also show Humanity, as a whole, standing in the presence of a beneficent Creator. But one whose love exacts our effort, our endurance, under whom pain and terror ofttimes do the offices of love.

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ADA.

How shall we reconcile a faith in this terrestrial advancement—generation standing upon generation—with the doctrine of immortality, the advancement of each individual soul in an eternal life?

SANDFORD.

Presuming that other objections have not shaken our faith in immortality, I am confident it will not be lost to us by our faith in progress, or by any actual progress attainable on earth.

It is the very nature of our progress in one direction to lead us to higher aspirations than earth can gratify.

MANSFIELD.

Death will be always with us, and the loss of those we loved. There will be spirits always to beckon us onwards to another life.

God will be ever with us. And when man has ceased to fear his fellow-man, he will dare to think nobly and rationally of God.

Some of our religious conceptions will change. Nor will the change, perhaps, be all gain. Our

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age may be surpassed in many respects by succeeding ages; but, if so, it will be also looked back upon with some tender regrets. Some, but not the wisest of our posterity, will wish they had lived in these times, which many of us misname as faithless and sordid.

ADA.

It is my faith that God will raise all His intelligent creatures finally to the knowledge and love of Himself. This, and nothing less than this, can I accept as the end and purpose of creation.

I must be permitted to think that the distresses of human life have, in part at least, their explanation in *this*, that they carry the mind onward to another world.

After all our generalisations, life is sad to many of us. Glorious things there are in heaven and in earth, but what says our poetess?

> "Two little tears suffice to hide them all;"

and age after age men have consoled themselves and each other by the hope of some compensating happiness hereafter.

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SANDFORD.

It is a natural sentiment, and I have no wish to interfere with it. I would only remark that, sooner or later, we must adopt the principle that good and evil form together a whole that is good. For, say we were compensated in another world for our miseries in this, we might still ask ourselves why we were not happy in *both* worlds, and our only rational answer must be that the misery of one world was in some manner necessary to the happiness of the other —that the two together made one beneficent whole.

MANSFIELD.

A world where happiness is meted out according to virtues we *have* practised, according to trials we *have* sustained, strikes me as a somewhat childish conception. A world where it is meted out according to the active virtues we *are* displaying, is a higher scheme. And such a world is also our own, at this present moment.

Preparation for another life! The idea is grand—none grander—if you have a high and

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large meaning for this preparation—if every beneficent activity, if every noble joy, if every exalted sentiment, is your preparation for eternity. The end of a thousand lives is just this, to live, under God, our highest life—to develop all our capacities for knowledge, happiness, goodness. Preparation for another world, in this sense, cannot be separated from progress or from happiness in this. It is identical with our highest enjoyment of life, with our noblest efforts to advance.

One word on a theme we have sometimes agitated—the union of justice and benevolence. I cannot conceive them separate in God or man. They are essentially one.

If human beings were a race to be made happy by simply drinking at some stream flowing with milk and honey, all that would be wanted would be to make the stream broad and deep enough, and see that there was standing-room for each. But man's happiness depends, first of all, upon his relations to his fellow-man. It is the good *character* which stands out evidently as the great creation in humanity itself.

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Cease to love the good man, cease to hate the bad man, and everything on earth goes to wreck and ruin—and everything in heaven too, so far as I dare think of heaven.

So long as the contrast between good and evil endures—and without that contrast there is no moral goodness—so long must the highest benevolence represent itself under the form of justice.

There may be intellectual beings, angels or spirits, framed on a quite different type from man. I can readily believe it, though, of course, I can form no conception of such beings. God may create beings, all of whom are perfectly good—beings who may have never heard or dreamt of evil—but goodness with such a race must have a different meaning than it has with us. Nor can such a race have our sentiment of justice.

Standing in my humanity, I see justice as the necessary form of the highest benevolence. It is the necessary means for the highest production, the good character. God on earth

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educates His own creatures to exercise justice upon each other, whether by formal tribunals, or the great tribunal of public opinion. What the *method* of His justice may be in other worlds I have no knowledge; but it is clear as light that I cannot carry up my conception of moral goodness, as formed by the contrast between good and evil, into any region of the universe, without finding there also, in some shape or other, the justice of God.

SANDFORD.

Meanwhile, in our terrestrial humanity, we see a complicated but harmonious scheme, where pain and pleasure, love and hate, praise and blame, reward and punishment, play their several parts in producing (so far as they are produced) the happy life and the good character. Our sentiment of justice is part of this great scheme which we attribute, as a whole, to a benevolent Author.

How natural it was in the earlier stages of human speculation, when the dark and the

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bright side, both of nature and of human nature, stood out in apparent contradiction—how natural it was to assign the darkness and the evil to one power, the brightness and the goodness to another! We, who know that darkness and light together—make vision!—that pain and pleasure together—make life!—cannot so break up the unity of our world.

In a system of polytheism, where the gods and goddesses took their several shares of mingled good and evil, no necessity was felt for the conception of a spirit purely malicious. What men condemned, as well as what they admired, was already distributed amongst such deities as a Venus or a Mars. And in a rude monotheism, where there was no repugnance to attribute to God the angry or terrible passions of men, the want would not be felt of such a conception as that of an evil spirit of a creative or governing order. It would not jar with the religious sentiment to apprehend God as author of both evil and good, even if evil were thought to originate from some corresponding passion.

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But as monotheism refined, and no such evil passion could be attributed to God, what explanation offered itself, in an unscientific age, but to imagine some other being to whom such evil purposes or passions *could* be assigned? A Manicheism of some form has therefore very extensively prevailed. Amongst the ancient Persians the one God seems to have retired from the scene, merely acting as ultimate umpire between Arimanes and Ormuzd. Amongst the Jews (who, if they borrowed here from the Persians, modified the idea to their own intellectual wants), the Eternal God never thus retired behind creation; He retained all that was good and great in His own right hand; and the evil spirit acts with them but a poor, subordinate part; being, in fact, but a vague and temporary expedient for explaining what seemed incongruous with their lofty and advancing conceptions of God.

We, constrained by science, or a scientific method of thought, to see the whole as one scheme, gather our idea of the character of God

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from the whole—from the tendency or manifest design of the whole. And if we say Benevolent Power projected this entire scheme, we cannot go back to find a separate cause for any part of it. We have but two conceptions, the world as a whole, and God as its author.

THE END.

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